



COMMONWEALTH BUSINESS FORUM 2024

23-24 OCTOBER **APIA,**
SAMOA

One Resilient Common Future:
Transforming Our Common Wealth

COMMONWEALTH

Enterprise and Investment Council

www.cweic.org

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One Resilient Common Future: Transforming Our Common Wealth



In October of this year, the Commonwealth will turn towards Samoa. Representatives from our 56 countries will gather to discuss some of the world's most pressing issues.

There are many challenges that we share - the ongoing impacts of climate disasters, conflict, lingering COVID-19 effects, economic downturn, high and growing indebtedness, rising inflation, and inequalities – these require a collective and united response, and as the Commonwealth, it is up to us to seize this opportunity. Our potential as a Commonwealth family - joined by values, interests, and practical advantages - needs to be realised. Trade is one of the most important things we share. As the Commonwealth, we are in a unique position to unleash the benefits of trade and investment for over one third of the world's population.

Our other challenge is to assess if we are all benefiting equally from this Commonwealth Advantage. The varying degree of economic development and challenges within our Commonwealth family requires tailored solutions, strategic financing, and strengthened collaboration between the public and private sector. The Commonwealth Business Forum will provide a platform for this collaboration, and to discuss how we can better seize our shared advantage.

As we welcome leaders from across the Commonwealth to Samoa, I hope you will take the opportunity to meet with your peers, contribute to the global dialogue, and champion Commonwealth-led initiatives.

**The Hon Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa,
Prime Minister of the Government of Samoa**



It is with great pleasure that I extend our welcome to the 13th Commonwealth Business Forum. Our thanks must go first to the Prime Minister of Samoa – Her Excellency Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa – for hosting this historic CHOGM and Commonwealth Business Forum, the first in the Pacific region for over 10 years, and the first held in a Small Island Developing State.

Sustainability and resilience are of course at the heart of this CHOGM, and though these challenges are felt acutely in the Commonwealth's SIDS, it is up to the whole of the Commonwealth to rise to these challenges and utilise the strength of its 2.5 billion citizens. There is much the Commonwealth can do to enable our economies to flourish, by reducing unnecessary barriers to trade, supporting technological advancements and innovation, transforming our workforce, and providing crucial access to finance.

56 countries, diverse and varied, speaking together with a single voice on global issues sends a clear and powerful message. Of course, Commonwealth Heads of Government are one piece of the puzzle, and the role of our private sector cannot be understated. It is our business leaders who help to unlock capital, provide technical assistance, and offer expertise to assist governments of all sizes to continue from strength to strength. The Commonwealth has been termed the 'mother of all networks' and nowhere is this more apparent than at the Commonwealth Business Forum.

The CWEIC team and I, in partnership with the Government of Samoa, look forward to welcoming you to this very special CBF and I look forward to meeting as many of you personally as I can.

**Lord Marland of Odstock,
Chairman, Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council**

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One Resilient Common Future: Transforming Our Common Wealth

Forum Programme

Wednesday 23 October 2024

All day Registration / Pass collection

0900 – 0930 **Opening Ceremony: One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth**

Ballroom

- The Hon Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa
- Lord Marland, Chairman, Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council

0930 – 1000 **Networking Break**

1000 – 1100 **Opening Plenary: The Global Economy; What's Next?**

Ballroom

The global economy is on the path to continued recovery following recent global shocks, however, continued high inflation, low underlying productivity growth, and unpredictable geopolitical and climate events still pose challenges. The Commonwealth is in a unique position to lead the way in demonstrating what inclusive economic recovery and growth can look like, while taking into consideration the challenges and opportunities facing its many nations, including its SIDS.

1100 – 1130 **Networking Break**

1130 – 1300 **Plenary 1: Access to Finance and the Scalability of Finance**

Ballroom

Access to finance is the cornerstone of economic development and resilience, especially within the Commonwealth's SIDS. This session will explore financial inclusion and innovative investment strategies to promote economic growth while addressing scalability challenges across the Commonwealth.

- Access to finance and investment
- Blended finance
- Building trust

1130 – 1300 **Roundtable 1: Skills Migration, Regional Collaboration**

Harbour View 1

Invite Only

Migration and mobility are crucial to supporting the economies of SIDS, delivering opportunities, capital flow and resilience against global shocks. This roundtable will explore regional collaboration on labour mobility and the challenges and opportunities that abound in the Pacific region.

- Enhancing labour mobility programmes
- Mobility for sustainable development
- Labour market dynamics

1130 – 1300 **Roundtable 2: Digital Transformation and Ecommerce**

Harbour View 2

Invite Only

Ecommerce is growing at an increasing rate in emerging markets, and provides opportunities for entrepreneurs and governments alike. This session will examine digital strategies and opportunities for the Commonwealth, and address the needs and challenges of SIDS within this crucial sector.

- FinTech
- Mobile centred platforms
- Resilient supply chains

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1300 – 1400

Networking Lunch

1400 – 1530

Ballroom

Plenary 2: Reducing Barriers to Trade

Despite continued rises in protectionism, and a challenging geopolitical backdrop, the Commonwealth remains committed to free trade in a transparent, inclusive, fair, and open rules-based system, which can be leveraged to foster innovations in global trade regulations and level the playing field for developing nations and SIDS. This session will discuss how the Commonwealth can leverage its advantage in the global economic environment for the benefit of all.

- Private sector driven SDG implementation in the Commonwealth
- Commonwealth partnerships in regional and bilateral trade agreements
- PPPs for sustainable development and resilience

1400 – 1530

Harbour View 1

Invite Only

Roundtable 3: Unlocking Green Investment; Risk Mitigation

This roundtable will discuss private sector resilience strategies in the face of climate change and climate shocks. There now needs to be a rebalance in the perception of risk to enable an open investment environment. This roundtable will also discuss local innovations within the Pacific region and how they can be applied across the wider Commonwealth.

- Insurance and parametric insurance
- Green finance
- Innovative finance for SIDS

1430 – 1530

Harbour View 2

Invite Only

Roundtable 4: The Business of Data

Data, and crucially, accurate data, is essential for transforming and modernising Commonwealth economies. SIDS face unique challenges as the digital economy continues to grow. This roundtable will focus on the need for inclusive and accurate data for evidence-based policy making, and will also look at how the private sector can provide new services and insights into emerging technologies.

- Standards
- AI, safety and equality
- Utilising space technologies

1530 – 1600

Networking Break

1600 – 1730

Ballroom

Plenary 3: Tech and Innovation

The rapid pace of technological advancement offers unprecedented opportunities for businesses to thrive and build resilience. This session will examine digital transformation, innovation ecosystems, and the economic impact of emerging technologies in driving prosperity across the Commonwealth - particularly for developing nations and SIDS.

- Digital inclusion
- Addressing the digital divide
- Standards and inclusive policy development

1600 – 1730

Harbour View 1

Invite Only

Roundtable 5: Investment in Lifelong learning

The private sector plays an essential role in upskilling the workforce at all career stages. Tailored education technology solutions are essential for addressing the diverse socioeconomic priorities of the

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Commonwealth, and traditional education paths may not always provide the best solutions. This session will address the challenges for building a robust and resilient workforce, particularly for developing nations.

- Upskilling
- Reskilling
- Educational technologies

1600 – 1730

Harbour View 2

Invite Only

Roundtable 6: Island Nation Leaders Roundtable

The Commonwealth's Small Island Developing States and Island Nations are at the forefront of some of the most pressing global challenges. This unique gathering of the Commonwealth's Island Nation leaders will consider strategies for long-term resilience and how the Commonwealth's business community can work together to increase prosperity for all.

- Increasing resilience for Island Nations and Small Island Developing States
- Unlocking access to finance
- Reducing barriers to trade

1900

Business Forum Fiafia Reception

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One Resilient Common Future: Transforming Our Common Wealth

Thursday 24 October 2024

All day

Registration

0900 – 1030

Ballroom

Plenary 4: Transforming the Workforce

The Commonwealth is home to one of the world's most dynamic workforces, and with 60% under the age of 30, it acts as the bedrock of economic development for many nations. The private sector plays a crucial role in maximising the potential of this workforce and the next generation of entrepreneurs. This session will look at some of these opportunities and explore how the unique dynamics of SIDS can play a vital role in achieving a prosperous and sustainable future.

- Human capital and migration
- Skills and education
- Leadership

0900 – 1030

Harbour View 1

Invite Only

Roundtable 7: Building Resilient Infrastructure

There is a critical need for infrastructure projects to process manageable risk profiles, demonstrate commercial returns, establish sustainability credentials, and exhibit financial attractiveness. This roundtable will explore scalable and innovative financing solutions for critical infrastructure projects that enhance resilience throughout the Commonwealth.

- Renewable energy and green investment opportunities
- Sustainable and secure supply chains
- Disaster preparedness

0900 – 1030

Harbour View 2

Invite Only

Roundtable 8: Global Standards; Collaboration and Partnerships

International standards play an essential role in enabling countries' trading capabilities. They can provide access to the global market for developing economies, reduce costs, and break down barriers to trade. However, challenges remain as frameworks can be slow to change and keep up with rapid technological advances. This session will look at how collaboration on global standards can help ease access for developing economies while keeping protections in place for the benefit of all.

- Accessible frameworks
- Public-private collaboration for new technologies
- Easing access of goods across borders

1030 – 1100

Networking Break

1100 – 1230

Ballroom

Plenary 5: The Blue Economy; Sustainability and Resilience

The Commonwealth's oceans hold immense economic potential, from marine resources to supply chains, tourism to fisheries and aquaculture. Yet key barriers remain to unlocking this potential in a secure and sustainable fashion. This session will explore innovative approaches to harnessing these resources while preserving the oceans for future generations, and how the Commonwealth's private sector can collaborate to drive a prosperous future for all.

- Private sector engagement in sustainable tourism
- Private sector resilience strategies in the face of climate change
- Food production and security

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1100 – 1230

Roundtable 9: SMES and Economic Growth

Harbour View 1

Invite Only

SMEs play a vital role in many Commonwealth nations, building economic resilience and driving growth across the economic landscape. However, barriers still remain, and the difficulties that SMEs and MSMEs face in accessing finance can prevent them from reaching new markets, and reduce their ability to compete when facing complex regulatory hurdles.

- SME scalability for resilient economic growth
- Women's role in the formal sector
- Resilient supply chains

1100 – 1230

Roundtable 10: Regional Trade Facilitation; Opportunities for all

Harbour View 2

Invite Only

Well-functioning trade frameworks and economic partnerships provide increased market access for many Commonwealth nations, and provide opportunities for SIDS and developing economies alike. This roundtable will focus on the challenges and opportunities for regional trade, and how the Commonwealth can leverage its network to overcome barriers and deliver great economic prosperity for all its regions.

- Legal systems
- Trade agreements
- Resilient supply chains

1230 – 1330

Networking Lunch

1330 – 1430

Closing Plenary: A Challenge for the Future

Ballroom

This session closes CBF 2024, looks ahead to Samoa's time as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth, and sets the challenges for the future.

Invite Only

Heads of Government and CEOs Roundtable

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The Commonwealth Business Forum 2024



The Key Commonwealth Business Event

- Addressed by Presidents and Prime Ministers from the Commonwealth's 56 member countries and beyond.
- More than 450 influential business delegates representing companies from across the world.



High level attendance

- Heads of Government supported by their accompanying delegations, including Ministers and senior business leaders.
- Chairs and CEOs of multinationals and global investment companies.
- World experts from a diverse range of fields.



Learn from influential speakers

- Over 100 distinguished speakers and panellists from business, government and international institutions.
- Plenary sessions focused on major international issues and addressed by global thought leaders.
- Invitation only roundtable discussion, for more focused dialogue.



An unrivalled networking opportunity

- Online booking system for contacting and arranging meetings.
- Delegate lounge, with dedicated staff to help facilitate meetings.
- Networking breaks, networking lunches, and dedicated sessions.



Showcase your brand

- Opportunities to introduce your company to a global business audience.
- Profile your company alongside global leaders in your field.
- Opportunity to host sessions during the Forum.

For more information or to attend please contact:

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