



# COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

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## COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING

21-26 October 2024



The CNMF was represented at CHOGM and the CPF by Angela Neuhaus from Australia who provides the following report. Angela is a member of the CNMF and a former CNMF Treasurer for many years.

Samoa was the first Small Island Developing State (SIDS) in the Pacific to host a CHOGM: no small feat for a remote and primarily rural country of approximately 200,000 people. On arrival it was immediately clear that the country had totally embraced the occasion. The airport had designated rows for delegates, music playing, buses and taxis for everyone and plenty of help for anyone who needed it.

Every village had chosen a country to represent and had coloured their roadsides with painted pot planters, fences and flags in the colours of their chosen country creating a very festive and inclusive atmosphere. The stretched accommodation was supplemented, not just by an ocean liner sitting in the harbour for the duration, but also by people opening their spare rooms and inviting guests into their own homes. The warmth and excitement of the Samoan people was maintained throughout and no one seemed concerned about the considerable disruption that must have been caused to their daily lives with such a huge influx of visitors.

Delegates came from across the Commonwealth but it was very obviously a Pacific event which Samoa generously shared with its Pacific neighbourhood. The formal CHOGM Opening Ceremony on Friday featured dancers from cultures across the Pacific including Australia and New Zealand. The Opening Ceremony was the first to be attended by Charles as King and Head of the Commonwealth. His presence was welcomed and his speech was thoughtful and well received. Contributing to the success, the 'large islands' of Australia and New Zealand, provided substantial and generous support in the form of finance and security.

For more about CHOGM, go to:  
<https://thecommonwealth.org/chogm>

## COMMONWEALTH PEOPLE'S FORUM

21-22 October 2024

*Climate Justice, Health Justice, and Freedom of  
Expression*

The People's Forum, organised and hosted by the Commonwealth Foundation, brought together delegations from accredited Civil Society Organisations across the Commonwealth, as well as representatives of other civil society organisations from Commonwealth countries.

The Main Forum events were held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. There was a follow up 'round table' discussion between representative civil society delegates, Foreign Ministers, and Officials on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October.

The main events were well timed, carefully scripted, and professionally adjudicated panels of 3-5 people carefully chosen for their expertise. They represented different regions, age groups, genders, and disciplines. After initial remarks from each panel the floor was opened to questions, and discussions were lively and encouraged.

Alongside these were numerous concurrent side events organised by individual CSOs. Unfortunately, so many overlapped or were hard to find in their quiet corners, but they did provide opportunities for more targeted discussions and interest groups. There were also many opportunities to catch up with other delegates over coffee and lunch breaks.

Also, concurrent to the main Forum, were a Business Forum, Woman's Forum and a Youth Forum all in separate venues making it very difficult to choose which events to attend as there were so many on offer.

There was some discussion among health delegates of a need for the addition of a Health Forum in future. However, equally, the overlap of interests with the theme at this CHOGM gave health issues a wider prominence which might have been lost had it had its own silo.

For more about the People's Forum go to:  
<https://commonwealthfoundation.com/peoples-forum/>



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## CHOGM and CPF

*One resilient common future –  
transforming our common wealth*  
Apia Samoa | 21-26 October 2024

Samoa was the first Small Island Developing State (SIDS) in the Pacific to host a CHOGM: no small feat for a remote and primarily rural country of approx. 200,000 people. On arrival it was immediately clear that the country had totally embraced the occasion. The airport had designated rows for delegates, music playing, buses and taxis for everyone and plenty of help for anyone who needed it. Every village had chosen a country to represent and had coloured their roadsides with painted pot planters, fences and flags in the colours of their chosen country creating a very festive and inclusive atmosphere. The stretched accommodation was supplemented, not just by an ocean liner sitting in the harbour for the duration but by people opening up their spare rooms and inviting guests into their own homes. The warmth and excitement of the people was palpable throughout and no one seemed concerned about the considerable disruption that must have been caused to their daily lives with such a huge influx of visitors.

The CHOGM Opening Ceremony featured dancers from cultures across the Pacific including Australia and New Zealand. This CHOGM was the first to be attended by Charles as King and Head of the Commonwealth. His presence was welcomed and his speech was thoughtful and well received.



A major focus for CHOGM were issues for Small Island States, such as: the effects of climate change and loss of land, economic disruption, food insecurity, cyclones and other disasters, mental ill health and depression, and population displacement.

The CHOGM Communique can be downloaded from:  
<https://thecommonwealth.org/news/chogm2024/Samoa-communique-leaders-statement-and-declarations>



The theme for the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) was *Climate Justice, Health Justice, and Freedom of Expression*.

The People's Forum, organised and hosted by the Commonwealth Foundation, brought together delegations from accredited Civil Society Organisations across the Commonwealth. The main events were well timed, carefully scripted, and professionally adjudicated panels of 3-5 people carefully chosen for their expertise. They represented different regions, age groups, genders and disciplines. After initial remarks from each panel the floor was opened to questions and discussions were lively and encouraged.

Alongside these were numerous concurrent side events organised by individual CSOs. These were a source of some frustration as so many overlapped or were hard to track down in their quiet corners but they did provide opportunities for more targeted discussions and interest groups. There were also many opportunities to catch up with other delegates over coffee and lunch breaks.



A visit to the Children's Hospital in Samoa. Angela is 2<sup>nd</sup> on left alongside Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai and Professor Vajira Dissanayake from the Commonwealth Medical Association.