

from the PRESIDENT



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This edition of the Commonwealth Nurse provides a report of the 2023 Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum (CCSPF), an annual event hosted by the Commonwealth Health Professions and Partners Alliance (CHPA), of which the CNMF is a founding member. One of the key purposes of the CCSPF is to provide recommendations to the annual Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting.

The title of the 2023 CCSPF was: *Supporting young people for a safe, secure, happy and healthy future*. In recognition that 2023 had been declared Commonwealth Year of Youth, the CCSPF was dedicated to exploring issues of concern to young people and recommending actions to provide them with a safe, secure, happy and healthy future.

The key messages from the CCSPF are outlined as well as the recommendations which were presented to Commonwealth Health Ministers.

The engagement of young people with nursing and midwifery as a career is critically important for the future health of both professions and ultimately, the future health and wellbeing of citizens of the Commonwealth. The COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrated the dependence of health systems and populations on the contribution of nurses and midwives.

We need young people to embrace nursing and midwifery as a lifelong career with unlimited potential and opportunities. The way student nurses and midwives are recruited; the way nurses and midwives are educated; and the way they are welcomed and supported as new graduates into the professions, all need to be carefully examined to make sure they are still fit for purpose and attractive to young people.

Across the Commonwealth 60% (one third) of Commonwealth peoples are aged between 15 to 29. The health, wellbeing, and involvement of young people is essential, not only to the future of the Commonwealth, but indeed, the future of our planet Earth.

This issue of the Commonwealth Nurses also reports on the Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform adopted at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in June 2022.

On 6 February 2023, the Commonwealth released an updated Youth Development Index with some surprising results which you can read about in the following pages.

2023 will be a year of rebuilding and renewal, for the CNMF and for many others as well. It was very disappointing not to be able to host a face-to-face Biennial Meeting of Members in 2022 or hold the 6th Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference. These are now planned for 2024. While we had a very good online attendance at the Biennial, it was not possible to recreate the collegiate atmosphere that we enjoy during face-to-face meetings.

The CNMF has been able to continue to progress several projects using Zoom online technology while in-country visits were not possible. A new project on oral health has begun, funded by Colgate, in partnership with C3 Collaborating for Health. C3 was founded by Christine Hancock, who CNMF members and friends will remember as the Chief Executive Officer of the Royal College of Nursing and later President of the International Council of Nurses. C3's focus is on non-communicable disease. There is increasing evidence that oral diseases, such as periodontitis, are directly linked to diabetes, cardiac diseases, respiratory diseases, and neurodegenerative diseases such as dementia. The CNMF is very pleased to be working so closely with C3 on this project.

I would encourage every nurse or midwife to continue to observe strict infection prevention and control processes as COVID-19 is far from over, even though countries have opened their borders and removed strict restrictions on their populations such as wearing masks. We must all remain vigilant to protect our own health and those of our family and friends.