

**COMMONWEALTH ORGANISATION FOR SOCIAL WORK**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTING NEW ECO-SOCIAL SUMMIT**

The Commonwealth<sup>i</sup> Organisation for Social Work<sup>ii</sup> held a virtual Board Meeting on 26 June 2021 and approved a landmark statement on human rights for all.



**COSW JOINS PARTNERSHIP ORGANISING NEW FORMAT GLOBAL SOCIAL SUMMIT**

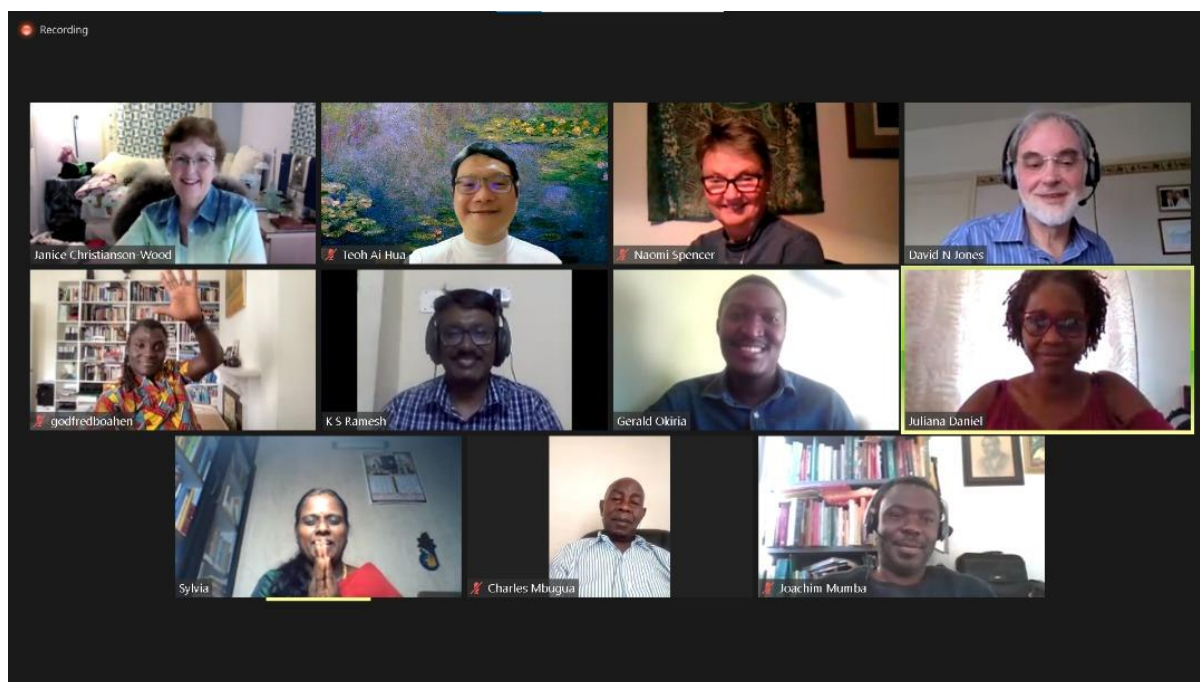
IFSW AND UNRISD (UN Research Institute for Social Development) have invited COSW to be a formal partner in a new format world summit on *'Co-building a new eco-social world: leaving no one behind'* on 29 June to 2 July 2022. COSW responded enthusiastically and nominated David Jones to be the representative to the planning committee.

**BOARD ATTENDANCE**

Those attending the Board meeting on 26 June 2021 included:

- Sylvia Daisy Romanus (India) - COSW Chair.
- Monique Auffrey (Canada) - Honorary Secretary (apologies)
- Godfred Boahen (UK) - Honorary Treasurer
- David N Jones (UK) Main Representative to the Commonwealth Institutions
- Board members - Jan Christianson-Wood (Canada), Juliana Daniel (Barbados), Teoh Ai Hua (Malaysia), Charles Mbugua (Kenya), Joachim Mumba (Zambia), K. S. Ramesh (India) and Naomi Spencer (Australia)

The Newsletter Editor is Gerald Okiria (Uganda) who usually attends Board meetings.



*COSW Board members in global discussion on Saturday 26 June 2021*

### **HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL**

The Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) has adopted a statement on *'Human Rights for all Peoples in the Commonwealth'* which restates the values and principles of the Organisation and reaffirms COSW support for the *Commonwealth Charter*.

Launching the statement, COSW Chair Sylvia Daisy Romanus said: 'The COSW statement on human rights for all makes clear that, as a Commonwealth Organisation, 'we cannot ignore the legacy of colonialism, racism and other discriminations which have left an indelible legacy within the Commonwealth . Therefore, in response to the worldwide #BlackLivesMatter protests and the indisputable evidence of structural racism and of persistent discrimination faced by Indigenous Peoples and other minorities around the Commonwealth, we reaffirm our commitment to the values expressed in the words of the Commonwealth Charter and recognise our responsibility to uphold those principles in the practice of social work and the education of social workers and to take action to challenge and correct past abuses.'

'These principles and commitments are not new in social work', said Dr Sylvia, but at this crucial and troubling time in the world, we need to restate them and be ready to stand by them'.

The press release and the statement can be found on the COSW [website](#).

### **CONFERENCES, WEBINARS AND RESEARCH**

The webinar on *Commonwealth History of Social Work* and the webinar tribute to former COSW Board member Terry Bamford are now on the website and available without charge (<https://cosw.info/photo-video/>).

The Steering Group for the joint project on *comparative histories of commonwealth social work* with the Institute for Commonwealth Studies is planning a webinar in early 2022. There will be a call for

abstracts so that people can present papers/presentations. Proposals are welcome from historians, practitioners, social work academics and others; presentations by or jointly with service users and experts by experience will be especially welcome.

Plans are being made for a webinar series on regulation of social workers across the Commonwealth, the first to be held later in 2021.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The new website ([www.cosw.info](http://www.cosw.info)) has been operational for several months and is slowly gathering views. Social media activity continues on Twitter and Facebook.

The first edition of the new style Newsletter was launched in March 2021. The second issue is due in July 2021 (<https://cosw.info/newsletter/>).

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

COSW exists primarily thanks to the voluntary commitment of the Board members and other colleagues, with minimal expenses. The Treasurer reported that there have been no significant transactions during the pandemic period. Available funds therefore total around £800.00. It was noted that the Commonwealth Secretariat £1,000 grant for the young carers' consultation had been disbursed appropriately. The annual financial report 2019-2020 had been accepted by Companies House (London).

### **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Board is reviewing governance arrangements and particularly membership criteria. A further meeting of a small group of Board members was held on Saturday 10 July and work to ensure an updated membership structure is continuing. COSW has extremely limited resources and capacity, relying primarily on voluntary commitment. It is essential that arrangements for administration of membership are sustainable.

### **COSW NETWORKING**

The second postponement of the **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting** due to the pandemic has created considerable uncertainty and added problems for the co-ordinated submission to CHOGM by Commonwealth Organisations on the CHOGM themes (<https://www.chogm2021.rw/>). COSW continues to contribute to development of these briefing papers.

COSW has been talking with the **Commonwealth Secretariat** & the **Foundation** about future developments and projects. The Commonwealth Youth Programme has indicated support for the development of a Commonwealth Young Carer Charter, building on COSW activity since 2006.

COSW continues to play a key role in the **Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations** (IFCO) (<https://www.ifco.online/ifco-history>). Proposals are underway to launch a health and wellbeing cluster of organisations interested in health and social service issues and a similar children's cluster. COSW is active in both.

COSW continues to play a significant role in the **Commonwealth Health Professions & Partners Alliance** (<http://www.chpa.co/>).

COSW continues to support the **Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network** (CSCN) (<https://www.clgf.org.uk/what-we-do/cities-network/>).

**PRESS RELEASE**

**16 July 2021**



The partnership with **international Federation of Social Workers** has been strengthened by the invitation to be a partner in the world summit described above.

COSW has written to **International Association of Schools of Social Work** and offered to develop a closer working relationship. The communication was welcomed and specific proposals have to be explored.

David N Jones

16 July 2021

For further information email [comsocwk@aol.com](mailto:comsocwk@aol.com)

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<sup>i</sup> The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent and equal countries. It is home to 2.4 billion people, and includes both advanced economies and developing countries. 32 members are small states, including many island nations. Member governments have agreed to shared goals like development, democracy and peace. Commonwealth values and principles are expressed in the Commonwealth Charter. The Commonwealth's roots go back to the British Empire. But today any country can join the modern Commonwealth. The last country to join the Commonwealth was Rwanda in 2009.

<sup>ii</sup> COSW is an Accredited Commonwealth Organisation with a history going back to the first meeting in 1994 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. COSW is a company limited by guarantee and registered in the UK. Its Board is drawn from all regions of the Commonwealth. COSW is affiliated to the International Federation of Social Workers and upholds the IFSW/IASSW global ethical principles.