

## News Brief on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2011

The [Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development](#) played a significant role in highlighting the importance of migration to development issues at the recent biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Perth, Australia, where leaders affirmed their commitment to “maximise the economic and social benefits of migration to improve the resilience and prosperity of Commonwealth members”.

In the final [communiqué](#) released from the summit, Heads called for “stronger international cooperation to manage migration effectively in countries of origin, transit, and destination” in order to enhance the positive effects of migration and curb against irregular migration. They also agreed to reduce remittance costs by removing barriers to remitting and encouraging greater competition in the industry.

These commitments stemmed significantly from a consolidated report presented by the Ramphal Commission, entitled [People on the Move: Managing Migration in Today's Commonwealth](#), which made a series of recommendations on ways to strengthen the development potential of migration for sending and receiving countries, including migrants themselves.

The report advocated the establishment of a Commonwealth Consultative Process to assist bilateral and regional cooperation in safeguarding migrants' rights. It also encouraged governments to engage positively with diaspora communities, and make efforts to shift the focus of national policies away from the policing of migration towards embracing more “development-friendly” approaches.

Prof. Brenda Yeoh, who leads the research cluster on Asian Migration at the Asia Research Institute, is one of the members appointed to the Commission, which is chaired by former Jamaican Prime Minister, the Hon. P J Patterson.

Other members include: Hon. Mr. George Vassiliou, former President of the Republic of Cyprus; Mr. Farooq Sobhan, President of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute; Ms. Jill Iliffe, Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth Nurses Federation; Prof. John Oucho, Founder and Chair of the African Migration and Development Policy Centre; and Mr. Will Day, Chair of the Sustainable Development Commission.

The Commission was established in 2009 to study issues concerning migration and development in the Commonwealth, with the aim of providing expert advice to governments on ways to adopt mutually beneficial and practical policies to maximise the benefits of international migration. It is the first Commission set up by the [Ramphal Centre](#), a think-tank on policy issues for the Commonwealth.

Following the Perth Summit, the Commonwealth Secretariat has welcomed the Ramphal Centre as a “beneficial strategic partner” in offering high-quality research and policy recommendations that would inform collective Commonwealth decision-making on migration issues.