

The Rt Hon Baroness Scotland QC
Commonwealth Secretary-General
Commonwealth Secretariat Headquarters
Marlborough House, Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

1 June 2022

Dear Baroness Scotland,

We write to you as Presidents of science academies in Commonwealth countries to urge you and Commonwealth Heads of Government to take coordinated and equitable action to address climate change, biodiversity and other critical and related sustainability challenges at the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali from 20–26 June.

We are delighted that CHOGM is now taking place in person, as it provides a vital opportunity to bring together Commonwealth leaders to discuss and agree on such action. As you may recall, in 2020 and in 2021, in the run-up to the dates when CHOGM had been due to take place, our academies called for joint action to address the shared challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and to ensure a resilient and environmentally sustainable recovery from COVID-19. The need for such action remains critical, as you highlighted in your closing speech to the Commonwealth Science Conference in 2021.

The key points that we wish to draw to your attention, and that of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, ahead of the 2022 CHOGM, are as follows:

- Use the opportunities of CHOGM and COP27 to coordinate discussions on the joint challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss and recognise their inherently interlinked nature, and in doing so, ensure that nature and biodiversity are properly valued and accounted for in national and international decision making.
- Take a ‘whole systems approach’ to address critical challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change and other global development challenges and work with the global research community to identify scientific and holistic approaches for addressing these issues without causing unintended damage.
- Develop realistic, evidence-based roadmaps to reach net zero carbon emissions by the middle of the century, grasping opportunities for a decarbonised economy and its benefits for people and life on earth.
- Strengthen cooperation on research, assessment, monitoring and data-sharing relating to the health of the oceans.
- Promote greater collaboration on data use between Commonwealth countries to address these and other critical sustainability challenges.
- Address global inequity and inequality when tackling all of these challenges to ensure a resilient and environmentally sustainable recovery from COVID-19.

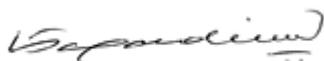
Further background on these issues is provided in our 2020 statement and 2021 letter.¹ As we argued then and is even more the case now, failure to tackle these issues in the increasingly narrowing timescale required, will pose significant risks to human development, welfare, and societal inequities and inequalities.

1. See <https://royalsociety.org/-/media/news/2020/commonwealth-statement-2020.pdf> and <https://royalsociety.org/-/media/news/2021/commonwealth-academies-letter-to-Baroness-Scotland-Secretary-General-of-the-Commonwealth.pdf>

It will impact all Commonwealth countries, particularly those that are most vulnerable. Governments must therefore take urgent action. Furthermore, delivering action on the urgent and interlinked issues of climate change, biodiversity loss and sustainable energy provision presents economic, social, and environmental opportunities for the whole Commonwealth.

We thank you for your consideration of the above. We wish you every success with the meeting and stand ready to work with you, the Commonwealth Heads of Government and associated ministerial forums, to assist in these crucial efforts using our collective knowledge, experience, expertise and convening power to bring about the necessary action required.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Chennupati Jagadish
Australian Academy of Sciences



Professor Beban Sammy Chumbow
Cameroon Academy of Sciences



Jeremy McNeil, C. M., FRSC
President, Royal Society of Canada



Professor Andreas Demetriou
President, Cyprus Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts



Professor John Ball
President, The Royal Society of Edinburgh



Emeritus Professor S. K. Sefa-Dedeh
President, Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences



Professor Ratemo W. Michieka
Kenya National Academy of Sciences



Professor Molibeli Taele
President, Lesotho Academy of Science and Technology



Dr Michael Atchia
President, Mauritius Academy of Science and Technology



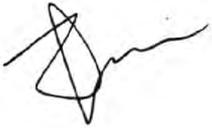
Professor Ekanem Braide FAS
President of the Nigerian Academy of Science



Professor Manasse Mbonye
President, Rwanda Academy of Science



Professor Adrian Smith
President, The Royal Society



Professor Tit Meng Lim
President, Singapore National Academy of Science



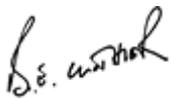
Professor Jonathan Jansen
President, Academy of Science of South Africa



Professor Priyan Dias
President, National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka



Professor Yunus D. Mgaya
President, Tanzania Academy of Sciences



Dr Brent Clothier FRSNZ
Royal Society Te Apārangi



Professor Peter N. Mugenyi
President, Uganda National Academy of Sciences



Professor Kavwanga Yambayamba
President, Zambia Academy of Sciences