

VOICES



BREXIT

What now for
the Commonwealth?

 **HM THE QUEEN'S 90TH
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**
Commonwealth-wide coverage

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The call for a new UK-India
visitor visa

 **FOOD SECURITY**
A priority issue across
the Commonwealth



The Commonwealth

HUB



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Patricia Scotland, Commonwealth Secretary-General unveil a plaque which signals the official launch of the Commonwealth Hub

On 9 June 2016, Her Majesty The Queen launched a new Commonwealth Hub which will bring Commonwealth organisations together in the same location to create a collaborative, dynamic and innovative way of working.

The three Commonwealth organisations that will move to a new combined centre of Commonwealth activity – Marlborough House and Quadrant House – are The Royal Commonwealth Society, the Commonwealth Games Federation and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. It is expected that other Commonwealth organisations will join the hub in due course with Quadrant House being renamed Commonwealth House.

The Commonwealth Hub will help to deliver the Secretary-General's vision to work more closely with all Commonwealth organisations to honour the values of the Commonwealth Charter and the commitments to health, education, climate change, good governance, equality and the rule of law of the SDGs and COP 21.

"The Commonwealth Hub represents an aspirational and exciting step forward for the Commonwealth to make the best possible use of its many and varied assets."

**Claire Whitaker OBE,
Chair of the Royal
Commonwealth Society**



WELCOME



As a new Trustee of the Royal Commonwealth Society, I have had the pleasure of witnessing a number of exciting developments at the RCS.

The Queen launched the Commonwealth Hub at a ceremony at the Commonwealth Secretariat in June. By locating into one physical space there will be valuable occasions

for collaboration and networking for the RCS as the civil society representative of the Commonwealth.

The RCS also had the pleasure of hosting several events to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday, including at the Patron's Lunch and a Commonwealth food and drink market.

During these past few months, there has been a seismic shift in the political landscape with Britain voting to leave the European Union. It opens up both challenges and opportunities for the Commonwealth. As Britain negotiates its post-Brexit future, there is a great deal of uncertainty over its role in Europe and the world. An immediate effect on the Commonwealth is that it places a larger obligation onto Cyprus and Malta to raise the profile of the Commonwealth in the EU. The new RCS Brussels branch will help with that effort.

There are also opportunities. Brexit will free Britain up to resume deeper trade and investment links with the fast growing Commonwealth. The RCS' work in this area is helping to show how links can be boosted, including simplifying UK visa requirements for India and considering the impact of Brexit on the Commonwealth.

Now is a once-in-a-generation chance for the Commonwealth to promote all that it does for 2.3 billion people around the world. I am delighted that the RCS is contributing actively to ensure that civil society plays an important role in what may well become a new era for the Commonwealth.

Linda Yueh

Trustee, The Royal Commonwealth Society







THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

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KEEP IN THE CONVERSATION

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COMMONWEALTH WOMEN LEADERS' SUMMIT

On Thursday, 14 July 2016, a high-level international gathering of gender advocates met at Marlborough House in London to discuss the obstacles and opportunities, problems and possibilities of the female population of the Commonwealth.

“Inspiring Women, Inspiring Change”

The event was a priority initiative of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, in her first 100 days. The Royal Commonwealth Society was a partner for the event, alongside the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network and Women of the World.

The Secretary-General encouraged the 100 delegates present to focus on real action, not just words: “As we move from aspirations to entitlements and from plans and intentions to actions, I thought it was necessary to convene this Women Leaders' Summit. It comes at an opportune time, a time that recognises women's capacity and capability to take control of their lives...”

Following an opening address from Patricia Scotland, keynote speaker Kiran Bedi, Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry in India, spoke passionately about her leadership strategies. Chosen by Readers' Digest as 'the most admired and trusted woman in India', her words echoed the Secretary General's call to action for powerful, collaborative change.



→ Kiran Bedi, Lieutenant Governor, Pudcherry, India, gives the keynote address at the Commonwealth Women Leaders' Summit

Bedi set the tone for the three discussion tracks for the Summit which focused on Violence Against Women and Girls, Women in Leadership, and Women's Economic Empowerment. Panel speakers from the Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network (CYGEN), facilitated by the RCS, helped shape discussion in the working groups, presenting implementable ideas that were included in the draft recommendations and action plan. The final set of recommendations are intended to act as a springboard to action for the Commonwealth WAMM (Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting) – Samoa in September – and for Commonwealth work on gender equality.

Though the focus was largely on women, the female voice was not the only one heard throughout Marlborough House. Young men, including CYGEN activists, were part of a wider body of male delegates at the Summit, evidence of support for the promotion of equality across the gender spectrum.

Working across differences, from the homes of grassroots advocates to the offices of Marlborough House, from the male to the female, is vital to ensuring that the goals, recommendations and commitments of the Commonwealth Women Leaders' Summit are met. Taking steps together, acting as support structures for young women and collaborating for change were all highlighted as important to supporting one of Patricia Scotland's key priorities in her role as Secretary-General. The recommendations outlined at this pivotal event will be implemented by the Commonwealth Secretariat and Civil Society partners alike. The RCS, CYGEN and others look forward to a shared agenda to inspire and ensure action to change lives.

MORE INFORMATION
#womenleaderssummit

THE FUTURE IS THE COMMONWEALTH HUB

Carl Wright is Co-Founder and Secretary-General Emeritus of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). He reflects on CLGF's successes and its future in The Hub.



As Secretary-General of CLGF since its foundation in 1994/95 to 2016, I have been privileged to work with our central and local government members and many partners in support of local democracy and good local government practices.

CLGF has become a key Commonwealth organisation with members in most of our 53 member states. We have achieved the recognition of the role of local government at repeated CHOGMs and, more recently, at global level in the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate. Our Aberdeen Principles on local democracy and good governance have been incorporated into the Commonwealth Charter and are being actively implemented. Our biennial CLGF Conference is a key date in the local government calendar and we have undertaken significant international knowledge-sharing, including through our Local Government Handbook. CLGF does extensive capacity-building and technical assistance and has partnerships and MOUs with DFID, the EU, UNDP, Cities Alliance, UCLG and Microsoft among others, recently establishing a new Sustainable Cities network to take forward a new urban agenda.

Over the past 30 years, I have been privileged to attend many CHOGMs and undertake missions to most Commonwealth countries. The Commonwealth has evolved and its substantial network of civil society and quasi-governmental bodies like CLGF has prospered. At the same time, the formal, intergovernmental Commonwealth has seen many challenges, not least on account of the different emphasis its

diverse members place on human rights as opposed to sustainable development – issues which previously had gone hand in hand, and had not been seen to be in contradiction.

With the support of Secretary-General Patricia Scotland, recognition is being given to ensuring greater practical collaboration between Commonwealth organisations through the establishment of the new Commonwealth Hub. This brings together the RCS, the Commonwealth Games Federation, CLGF as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Hub will ensure that the Commonwealth as a whole addresses the legitimate interests of its members on respect for fundamental political values, including counteracting violent extremism and radicalisation of our youth, as well as helping them to implement the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, notably through localising the implementation of the SDGs by civil society and local government.

CLGF and the Commonwealth face resource and other challenges, but having our new Hub is a way to be more cost-effective and results-based. This will provide a sound basis for attracting new resources from member states and external partners, including the private sector. At a time when political populism, xenophobia and overt racism is growing in many countries, fuelled by fear of religious extremism and large-scale movements of populations, the Commonwealth remains a model for international co-operation, for the promotion of an inclusive society and for tolerance in public life. It is therefore essential that we all seek to continue to strengthen its capacity and its outreach, not least through promoting our new, joined-up Commonwealth Hub.

 **MORE INFORMATION**
www.clgf.org.uk #CommonwealthHub

BREXIT

WHAT NOW FOR THE COMMONWEALTH?

The UK's withdrawal from the European Union is likely to create new challenges for the other 52 Commonwealth countries and the broader network but also has the potential to open up new opportunities for the Commonwealth.

After a long campaign, the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union through a historic referendum on 23rd June 2016. The decision to leave will impact the UK's foreign policy environment and influence in the European Union. It is highly likely that this will have a knock-on effect on the wider Commonwealth network. As part of the Society's ongoing Commonwealth Conversation into the impact of 'Brexit', it hosted a roundtable discussion for Commonwealth organisations to explore this new foreign policy terrain. Following this discussion, here four experts give their views on the challenges and opportunities for the Commonwealth, post-Brexit, from a civil society perspective.

 **MORE INFORMATION**
bit.ly/cwconversation-brexit



Richard Bourne

Trustee

Commonwealth
Human Rights
Initiative (CHRI)

RCS Vice-President

The Brexit decision by British voters is disruptive for the international system, including the Commonwealth, in ways that we cannot yet foresee. Each Commonwealth state will be affected differently, but none will be immune. Already, for example, Tanzania has withdrawn from the European Partnership Agreement; a new context has arisen for Jamaica's commission on CARICOM membership; more small islands, with limited resources, are likely to follow Samoa in basing their European representation in Brussels, rather than in a London High Commission.

The invincible expansion of the European Union, which started when the UK, Denmark and Ireland joined the EEC in the 1970s, has

gone into reverse. The EU example has stimulated the African Union and regional bodies around the world, many aspiring to free movement of labour. International co-operation could be replaced by an anarchic system, where each state must deal directly with every other.

But how many of these international institutions, negotiated by governments, enjoy consent and support from their peoples? They can be seen, as they were by Brexiteers, as cosy cartels, from which only a few may benefit. There is a lesson for the Commonwealth: it needs more understanding from citizens in its 53 states.

➤ www.humanrightsinitiative.org



Sue Onslow

Senior Lecturer

Institute of
Commonwealth
Studies

One of the greatest challenges to the Commonwealth in a supposedly brave new BREXIT world will be to secure Britain's determined commitment to maintain, and even boost dramatically, its financial commitment to the Commonwealth development agenda. This could well prove difficult. It is highly likely that Britain's international aid budget, currently ring-fenced at 0.7% of GDP, will be a target for government cuts in the autumn. This could impact adversely on British funding for the Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as

bilateral aid programmes to Commonwealth countries, in addition to the loss of Britain's contribution (currently approximately 15%) to the European Development Fund, and the positive role Britain has played in the past in encouraging a progressive development approach in the EU. Yet, a reconfiguration of British financial assistance, implemented strategically, could have multiple benefits for the Commonwealth.

One of the greatest opportunities lies in the field of education. In the early days

of the modern Commonwealth, the greater proportion of those who later became leading politicians, lawyers or senior professionals across the expanding Commonwealth were educated at UK universities, building lifelong international friendships and professional networks, and instilling a particular emotional and intellectual bond with the UK itself. This pattern of Commonwealth tertiary education has now shifted dramatically,

to home, regional or American universities. The UK government would do well to increase dramatically the number of scholarships offered to Commonwealth citizens – and expressly to label them as Commonwealth awards – over and above the current 700 Chevening international scholarships administered by the FCO.

➤ www.commonwealth.sas.ac.uk



Edwin Laurent
Director
Ramphal Institute

Brexit will have consequences way beyond the UK's shores, and developing Commonwealth countries with their longstanding trade, investment and commercial links with the UK, will be among the most affected.

Some countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, helped by Economic Partnership Agreements with Europe, currently export to the UK duty-free and without restrictions. Brexit will end that, but will permit the UK to independently set and pursue its own pro-development policies and extend equivalent trade privileges and support to these countries. Development co-operation could suffer though. The UK's withdrawal from the EU will deny Brussels its progressive perspectives and substantial contribution to the aid budget. But since the Government is committed to the UN's 0.7%

aid target, it can channel those funds directly or through other intermediaries.

Brexit therefore offers an opportunity for the UK to engage more directly and constructively with developing Commonwealth countries to ensure that its financial assistance makes a fuller contribution to international sustainable development.

The Ramphal Institute has been researching Brexit's development implications and assessing the further work, consultation and outreach needed to support policy-making to safeguard Commonwealth developing countries' interests, so that they will not be harmed, but will flourish in the post-Brexit era.

➤ www.ramphalinstitute.org



Erum Masood
Advisor, Media
and Asia
Commonwealth
Businesswomen's
Network

The Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (CBW) sees the situation moving forward as opportunities to be seen, secured and sustained in three ways. Firstly, in being able to create the space, make the case and bring people to the place of a more diverse and dynamic range of trade and investment markets beyond Europe – in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean and in Small States. Secondly, in the ability to gain from new trade deals, including through targeted Aid for Trade which 'can play a major role...to facilitate women's equal and active participation in domestic, regional and international trade' (Addis Ababa Action Agenda). While greater policy consideration is needed on what the UK can and should offer to developing countries on trade, this also provides a unique opportunity to integrate gender awareness and consideration of gender into trade policies and agreements from the outset, in order

to proactively include women and woman business enterprises in the global market. This also provides an opportunity to ensure that successful gender-sensitive trade policies and practices are identified and a cohesive, nationally-led and multilaterally supported programme developed to upscale these initiatives. This would include support for the development of consortia of women entrepreneurs to collaborate and do business across global value chains and to access public procurement tenders. Thirdly, to accelerate and accentuate support for trade-related capacity-building programmes, such as those of CBW on procurement, entrepreneurship and women on boards and women's engagement with international markets, for example through the CBW Commonwealth Businesswomen Multilateral Trade Missions.

➤ www.cwbusinesswomen.org

THE COMMONWEALTH AND GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

‘There is no single pathway to global food security. Amongst an array of solutions, three show promise: new technologies, enhanced trade through biosecurity, and reduction in food losses and waste.’

Dr Denis Blight clarifies the situation.

New Technologies

Research delivering higher yielding varieties of cereals is key. Half of the increases are achievable through progress in potential yield and half through yield gap closing – sub-Saharan Africa presents significant opportunities to close yield gaps, and potential yield increases will be derived from breeding gains. The Consortium of Global International Agricultural Research Centers’ (CGIAR) research programs have made good progress in Eastern Africa, sometimes with Australian involvement through the Australian Centre for International Research (ACIAR) projects on maize legume intercropping and small zero till drills, and through the Borlaug Global Rust Initiative on global rust screening in Kenya.

Productivity improvements in animal and other commodities must also be pursued.

As African agriculture moves from subsistence to market-led systems, and some small producers generate food surpluses to sell, products must address market demand. Three things underpin success in demand-led breeding: targets that emphasise quantitative goals, improved varieties to reach and fulfil client expectations; a strategy designed for each new variety with a staged plan for line progression decisions, and a delivery investment plan; and greater emphasis on the views of clients - success is determined by the demand and use of the new variety throughout crop value chains.

Biosecurity and Trade

Trade can aid food security but intra-Africa trade is constrained by concerns on biosecurity and phytosanitary safeguards in a continent of porous borders and countries vulnerable to globally invasive species.

A partnership between Australia and Africa – The Australia Africa Biosecurity



Partnership (AAPBP) – aims to strengthen plant biosecurity capacity in ten, mostly Commonwealth countries, in Eastern and Southern Africa. It aims to foster close interaction between their National Plant Protection Organisations on early warning systems for emerging pest threats, and for a regional approach to the management of pests already present in one or more of the target countries. Pressing biosecurity challenges in Africa include maize lethal necrosis, the tomato leaf miner, fruit flies and panama disease of bananas. Action plans to address these risks are achievable.

In 2016, a series of workshops in Africa and attachments of African fellows in Australia, is sharing Australian biosecurity expertise with African plant protection specialists. These steps help to identify pest prevention and management procedures appropriate in Africa, and build mentoring links between Australian and African biosecurity specialists.

Food Losses and Waste (FLW)

Reducing FLW (30-40% of production) can improve global food security, sustainably – an objective which gained international profile at the G20 summit in 2015. It embraces the whole food chain; questions who benefits and loses from FLW; who should pay for reduction measures; and environmental benefits of better management. Estimates from 2007 suggest that the global carbon footprint

of FLW was approximately seven percent of all global emissions.

The public, and private sectors (Nestlé has declared war on waste), and communities have roles. The Crawford Fund has convened a representative international panel to address the issues at its Parliamentary Conference in Canberra in late August 2016.

Conclusion

Food security is a priority issue for all sectors in the Commonwealth – especially in Africa. A critical value-adding role for the Commonwealth, perhaps through knowledge generation and sharing, is a matter for consideration.

MORE INFORMATION

Crop yields and global food security: will yield increase continue to feed the world? by RA Fischer
www.crawfordfund.org | www.cgjar.org | www.aciar.gov.au

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Denis Blight, AO FRSA, Chief Executive of the Crawford Fund, has held the positions of Australian diplomat, public servant and Chief Executive. His association with international agricultural research began 25 years ago, as the first employee of ACIAR. From 1984 until 1986, he was head of the Australian Aid program for south-east Asia and China. Prior to the Crawford Fund, he was Director-General of CAB International, and Chief Executive of IDP Education Australia. Dr Blight is a member of RCS ACT branch.

THE PATRON'S LUNCH

On Sunday 12th of June, representatives of over 600 charities and organisations, of which HM The Queen is the patron, attended The Patron's Lunch in celebration of Her Majesty's 90th birthday.

Over 10,000 guests gathered on The Mall in London for an iconic street party, with picnics and parades. While the event offered a reflection of The Queen's dedication to these organisations for so many years, Her Majesty was keen for it to have a fundraising purpose, in order to further support her charities in the future. The proceeds from the event will therefore go to the newly created, Patron's Fund.

“
...The Patron's Lunch has been a team effort – a characteristic that is common to all of the charities and organisations of which The Queen acts as Patron.”

**Peter Phillips, Managing Director
of The Event Team**

The Royal Commonwealth Society was delighted for two staff members to host a table of guests from amongst its supporters, branch members and Associate Fellows. The weather, not at all promising at the outset, cleared in time for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, along with Prince Harry, to walk the length of The Mall and the sun was out in time for the arrival of Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Meanwhile, all over the country events and street parties were being held, bringing together communities in celebration and in fundraising for local causes.

“
I pay tribute to the commitment, selfless devotion and generosity of spirit shown by the hundreds of charities and voluntary organisations represented here today. You are an example to us all.”

Her Majesty The Queen

Royal patronage is an important part of the work of The Queen and The Royal Family and Her Majesty's involvement with such charities and organisations is both to support and to encourage public and voluntary service. Her Majesty's patronage of these organisations helps to recognise their achievements and the contributions they make to the many different sectors of society, both in the UK and across the Commonwealth.

“
Inspiring voluntary action, as well as fundraising, is at the heart of The Patron's Lunch.”

**Sir Stuart Etherington, Chair of the Board of
Trustees for the Patron's Fund and CEO of NCVO**

It is understood that members of The Royal Family have been lending their names through formal patronages since the 18th century. The Society of Antiquaries was one of the first with King George II as its patron. The Society still exists today and retains its Royal patronage through The Duke of Gloucester's involvement. Others, such as The Mothers' Union, were first patronised by Queen Victoria. Many other organisations have enjoyed a long history of Royal association; a large number of The Queen's patronages were inherited from her father, King George VI on her Accession, others from Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and Princess Margaret.

 **MORE INFORMATION**
www.thepatronslunch.com
www.royal.uk



QUEEN & COMMONWEALTH: 90 GLORIOUS YEARS

To mark Her Majesty The Queen's 90th birthday the Royal Commonwealth Society, in collaboration with Henley Media Group, was delighted to create the publication, *Queen & Commonwealth: 90 Glorious Years*.

“

I am a year younger than The Queen and my sister was a year younger than Princess Margaret. When we were children, we were dressed in similar clothes and called by neighbours, 'The little Princesses'. Sounds quaint now but it did forge a bond that has never left me. She is admirable and an example, so thank you once again for the book.”

Dr. Joyce Hargrave-Wright, Fellow of the RCS

“

It is a lovely book – so many photos and so many tributes to a remarkable woman. It is easy to get blasé but when one thinks about it, 64 years of devotion and commitment really is something to celebrate.”

Wendy Orr, RCS Supporter and Volunteer

“

It is full of attractive and interesting accounts and pictures of the life of the Head of the Commonwealth, and reminds us how fortunate the Commonwealth has been in having as its first Head such a devoted, positive, humane and inspirational person.”

Martin Williams CVO OBE, HM Diplomatic Service 1963-2001

The book commemorates Her Majesty's 64 years of service and dedication to the Commonwealth and looks back on her life and role as Head of this family of nations. Featuring messages from Commonwealth dignitaries, including the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC and current Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, The Hon Dr Joseph Muscat MP, Prime Minister of Malta, the publication reflects upon the impact and influence Her Majesty has had throughout the Commonwealth.

The book was widely distributed and the Society was delighted to receive many messages of thanks and appreciation from RCS Branches, Supporters and Life Members and to hear of their connections with both Queen and Commonwealth.



 **MORE INFORMATION**
www.thercs.org/our-work/publications

COMMONWEALTH FINE FOOD AND DRINK MARKET

On Sunday, 12 June the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Duke of York Square held a Commonwealth Fine Food and Drink Market in celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday.

Curated by Royal Warrant holder Partridges, this special Sunday market showcased the culinary delights of the Commonwealth through a diverse range of businesses.

Visitors included local MP, Greg Hands, and the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, Cllr Elizabeth Rutherford.





CALL FOR A NEW UK-INDIA VISITOR VISA

In July, the Royal Commonwealth Society launched a new report, *A Passage from India* – in partnership with leading aviation and tourism groups.

The report recommends a reformed UK-India Visitor Visa costing £87 for two-year access – the same offer recently made to China. At present, Indian nationals pay a hefty £330 for a two-year visa, over £80 for six-months.

Compounding this trend, France has now overtaken the UK as India's most visited European destination, drawing 500,000 visitors from India in 2015. Other nations are increasing Indian visitor numbers and importantly maintaining their own market share. For instance, the US offers a ten-year visitor visa for the price for just \$160. There is simply no contest.

The Society argues that the Commonwealth association needs to be highlighted in Government policy across a broad range of issues. The Commonwealth offers shared values, democratic traditions, commitments to human rights, similar legal systems, and a common language providing a distinct benefit, demonstrated as a Commonwealth Advantage with economic and social returns of up to 20% between members.

India's inclusion in the visa scheme in preference over other Commonwealth



This would help to reverse the UK's falling market share of global Indian tourists, which has halved over the last decade. This loss of market share is costing the UK economy an estimated £0.5bn per year and over 8,000 jobs. In 2015, just 420,000 Indians visited the UK and spent a total of £433m.

nations is due to India's vast economic, democratic, and cultural powers that can more than match China. Over time further arguments can be made to extend a reduced two-year visa fee to other Commonwealth nations, but as a pilot scheme India represents the best candidate.

Turning back to the report specifically, it includes voices from industry both in India and the UK, as well as from the Indo-British community. These comments are highlighted in this article as a means of balancing the statistical evidence with a human element.

The report launch took place in the Houses of Parliament in London with a strong turnout and a wide-ranging panel which included Nigel Huddleston MP, former Head of Travel at Google; Deirdre Wells OBE, former Head of Tourism for the UK Government; Dr Naushad Forbes, President, Confederation of India Industry (CII); and Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII.

There was also significant media coverage of the report in India and the UK. It was reported in print and online in publications such as *The Times of India* and the *Hindustan Times* as well as the *Evening Standard* and *City AM* in the UK.

Next year also sees the UK-India Year of Culture, marking 70 years since Indian Independence. The year-long programme of events will celebrate collaboration in the arts, business, music, design and much more. Having a cheaper and extended UK visitor visa will help to enhance these endeavours and provides an opportune moment.

In addition, the EU referendum has brought wholesale change to the UK Government. This provides a fresh prospect to advocate for this visa reform across a range of Ministers and Departments. The aim is to work with both governments to ensure the recommendation is considered and then implemented in time for the 2017 UK-India Year of Culture.

MORE INFORMATION

The full report can be downloaded at:
www.thercs.org/our-work/research-and-reports

“

This policy suggestion for a two-year UK visa for Indian nationals could provide a big boost to tourism, and comes at a very opportune time as 2017 is declared the UK-India Year of Culture. To optimize exchanges of people, business and ideas, it is important that both the UK and Indian governments discuss this promising proposal openly and collaboratively consider delivering it. The strength of the UK-India relationship today must also reflect in a stronger visa regime. ”

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General,
Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)



→ RCS Report
launch at the
Houses of
Parliament,
June 2016

“

I strongly welcome this idea of cutting down the visa fees for a long term visitor visa to the UK.

Implementation of the same for Chinese visitors proves that it is possible and welcomed by the British government. And I believe more Indians would be willing to travel more often to the UK when they have the freedom to travel on a larger timeline. ”

Sukanya, UK

“

With flights to and from India's seven largest cities, Heathrow provides some of the UK's most important links with the country. India is one of the fast-growing economies whose population has an increasing desire to travel the globe to visit exciting destinations or to seek investment opportunities in London and around the UK via Heathrow. With the UK's close ties to India, we are well-placed to attract these visitors and Heathrow's transport links are crucial to achieving this. ”

John Holland-Kaye, CEO, Heathrow Airport

INSPIRING CHANGE, CREATING A LEGACY

Launched at Buckingham Palace in July 2014 in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses, The Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry, The Queen's Young Leaders Programme began the search to find the next generation of inspirational young leaders who could make their mark on the Commonwealth and embody the values for which it stands.



Set up to honour The Queen's 60 years of service as Head of the Commonwealth, each year 60 exceptional young people aged 18–29 receive a Queen's Young Leaders Award. The Commonwealth is youthful: 60 per cent of its 2.2 billion population is under the age of 30 so the programme looks to the youth to inspire change and help create improvements in their own lives and those of Commonwealth citizens. By empowering a new generation of young Commonwealth leaders communities will benefit from a lasting legacy.



↑ The Queen's Young Leaders visit Represent Radio during the 2016 Residential Week

Run as a partnership between The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, The Royal Commonwealth Society and Comic Relief, the programme has a five year timeframe, and with the mid point reached, now is a good opportunity to take stock.

The Commonwealth's got talent

From villages to cities, community groups to Ministries of Youth, the call has gone out: *the search is on!* The result has been the uncovering of talent in diverse places as thousands of young people have been nominated or encouraged to apply. Since the launch, there have been two cohorts of Queen's Young Leaders. There has already been at least one Award Winner from each of the 53 Commonwealth countries, with a broad balance between young women and men from all backgrounds. The quality of applicants has been impressive, as Aaron Hape, who has served on the Advisory and Selection Panel, highlights: "It is a truly humbling experience to see the kind of work that young people are carrying out across the Commonwealth, and across a diverse range of issues. Such an amazing pool of talented young people."

Making a difference

The intention is to strengthen the skills of Award Winners so that they can continue to change lives and lead change in their communities. They receive a year long programme that includes training and mentoring from the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, networking opportunities across the Commonwealth, and participation in a residential programme in the UK during which they receive their Award from Her Majesty The Queen. This combination seems to be working. John Take from Papua New Guinea (PNG) says: "this is an incredible programme. It has created the platform for me to expand my projects, impact and motivate and inspire other



↑ Kenyan Queen's Young Leader, Alex Mativo, receives his Award from HM The Queen

young leaders in PNG and contribute to my country's economic development".

Edmund Page from the UK reports: "Since becoming a Queen's Young Leader many things have changed for me. My organisation has doubled in size and impact and I have grown in confidence. I have a clearer idea of what it means to be a good leader."

Nushelle de Silva from Sri Lanka reflects: "The programme has helped me break down my strengths and weaknesses, articulate more clearly what I stand for and what I'm passionate about. My unwavering belief in the power of the arts to transform communities is a deep-seated desire to give people access to tools to think for themselves."

Whatever their chosen field of endeavour, the Queens Young Leaders have something in common: a vision and drive to help others and make this world a better place. With the support and nurturing of the programme they are going on to achieve even more in their chosen areas of action for change.

RCS Associate Fellows Programme

At the end of their year Queen's Young Leaders are invited to become Associate Fellows of The Royal Commonwealth Society. The aim of the Associate Fellowship is to broaden engagement with these high achieving young people, to enhance their involvement with the Commonwealth and to maintain that engagement well into the future.



↑ The Queen's Young Leaders of 2016 with the Commonwealth Secretary-General at Marlborough House, London

The Associate Fellows Programme is a pan-Commonwealth youth network that reaches across the Commonwealth for mutual benefit. It provides a means of connecting with Commonwealth institutions and a resource for the RCS to draw opinions from and to connect with youths across the Commonwealth in support of its programmes and policy work.

“

Along with natural talent you need to work hard, you need a degree of dogged persistence and you need to be courageous. Leadership and being universally popular do not always go hand in hand. You also need to be tolerant and magnanimous because you have an advantage not shared by all. And finally, rather perversely, you need to have luck and the judgement to take advantage of opportunities that come to you.”

Michael Lake, Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society, from his address to the Queen's Young Leaders at Madingley Hall, Cambridge, 21 June 2016

The Associate Fellows Forum facilitates and encourages online discussion on any Commonwealth topic. It enables connections to be made through which individuals can learn from and support each other. Discussions are started and questions are raised in which the RCS gets involved as appropriate, offering suggestions, prompting approaches and providing resources.



MORE INFORMATION

www.queensyoungleaders.com

bit.ly/TheRCS_AssociateFellows

PROGRESS TOWARDS AN LGBT-INCLUSIVE COMMONWEALTH?

This year's theme of *An Inclusive Commonwealth* highlights the Commonwealth's aspiration to accept diversity in all of its forms and foster societies which respect and support all groups to be part of political, social and economic life.

Being inclusive of diverse ethnic, religious, gender, national and other identities is something that most Commonwealth leaders commit to in principle. However, the concept of *An Inclusive Commonwealth* has been most tested by the treatment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) citizens across the Commonwealth. While many LGBT people face legal, social and economic discrimination, there are signs that Commonwealth countries are making policy progress to create more LGBT-inclusive societies. A recent report by the Royal Commonwealth Society, the Kaleidoscope Trust and the Commonwealth Equality Network outlines

this policy progress against a difficult political environment.

Across the world, 38 of the 53 Commonwealth countries criminalise sexual activity between consenting adults of the same sex. Many of the laws that do this were imposed by the British Empire as part of the social engineering of the time. In some countries, these lie dormant and are not enforced, but in many other countries they are enforced alongside enhanced legal persecution of LGBT people. This has been coupled with discrimination in wider society and intolerant attitudes. As this discrimination has crept up the media agenda it has been met with fierce condemnation by countries such as Canada, the UK and Australia, which in the past have used the Commonwealth as a platform to lobby other members. A quick glance at reports of these incidents suggests a polarised Commonwealth on the rights of LGBT people. However, beneath the surface, change is quietly happening.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION FOR LGBT PEOPLE



Specific Provisions on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: South Africa was the first country in the world to constitutionally protect its citizens from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation; Fiji and Malta followed, adding gender identity.

The RCS and its partners' latest research sheds light on many initiatives to support LGBT people in society and to address discrimination. For example Jamaica, once described as the most homophobic country in the world by *Time Magazine*, has supported anti-bullying campaigns and trained health professionals on the needs of LGBT people. In India, the State Government of Tamil Nadu has set up a Transgender Welfare Board to help co-ordinate policy-making in support of transgender citizens. Political leaders, including the Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, along with former leaders of Mozambique, Fiji and Botswana, have used their office and status to speak out against

discrimination. Creating legal protections against discrimination is a key issue for many countries. Some have included sexual orientation and gender identity alongside race, religion, sex and age non-discrimination clauses in employment and human rights laws. Three countries have taken the route of specifically including protection for LGBT people in their constitutions. Under Nelson Mandela, South Africa was the first country in the world to ban discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in its constitution. Fiji and Malta have done the same and added gender identity as a protected characteristic.

The most fundamental change that a government can make for LGBT people is to decriminalise consensual same-sex activity, which is so often used to persecute or justify discrimination against LGBT citizens. For many countries this is part of a complete modernisation of colonially-imposed criminal codes. The report by the RCS and its partners identifies several countries that have done this including Mozambique, which repealed vague Portuguese provisions that described 'security conditions for those who commit acts against nature'. Since the report was published this progress has continued. Both Seychelles and Nauru have taken the step of repealing their colonially-imposed criminalisation clauses. Nauru, like Mozambique, took the option of including decriminalisation as part of a general overhaul of its penal code, previously based on the 1899 Queensland Penal Code. The reforms also included many other welcome changes, including decriminalising suicide and adding new bans on marital rape, slavery and child labour.

The experience of Nauru also demonstrates how the Commonwealth can support its members in achieving more inclusive policy-making. The recent reforms were fundamentally driven by the Nauruan government but the Australian Attorney-General's Department worked in close consultation with the Government of Nauru to assist it to undertake these reforms. Other Commonwealth actors can also play a role in providing technical, policy and legal advice to countries willing to undertake reforms to support human rights, development and legal modernisation. This could happen along bilateral government lines, could utilise



POLICIES FROM COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVES

	<p>Showing Societal Leadership: The Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis has joined with the UN Secretary-General to call for an end to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity particularly as it drives vulnerability to HIV.</p>
	<p>Moratoria and Declarations on Citizenship: In lieu of repeal, the government of Belize has consistently declared that it does not enforce a colonial-era law banning homosexual people from entering the country.</p>
	<p>Open Military Service: South Africa's military has had anti-discrimination policies in place since 1996 and has expanded spousal and pension benefits to same-sex life-partners.</p>
	<p>Public Awareness and Education: The Ministry of Education in Jamaica has conducted anti-homophobic bullying campaigns in schools and the Ministry of Health has sensitised health-care providers about issues specific to LGBT people.</p>
	<p>Inclusive Policy Making: In the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, local government has been innovative in including transgender Indians in policy making through schemes like the Transgender Welfare Board.</p>
	<p>Diplomacy: In 2011, 16 Commonwealth countries supported a positive statement on sexual orientation to the UN Human Rights Council.</p>

the technical support of the Commonwealth Secretariat or involve a whole range of civil society groups and professional associations to support governments. While there is a long way to go to stamp out discrimination in all of its forms, the growing policy change to support LGBT people means the achievement of *An Inclusive Commonwealth* for all is slowly growing closer.

MORE INFORMATION

The full report *A Commonwealth Toolkit for Policy Progress on LGBT Rights* by Lewis Brooks and Felicity Daly DrPH can be downloaded at: www.thercs.org/our-work/research-and-reports

CELEBRATING THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Across the Commonwealth RCS branches celebrated HM The Queen's 90th birthday in their own style, some partnering with other organisations and all interacting with local diplomatic and government officials.



Australian Capital Territory Branch

In Canberra, the RCS branch partnered with the Australia-Britain Society for a dinner at the Commonwealth Club to celebrate The Queen's official birthday. The guest speaker was the former Governor of Queensland and RCS ACT member, The Hon. Penelope Wensley AC, who entertained guests with memories of The Queen over the years in an informal and affectionate reflection from The Queen's first visit to Australia in 1954, the first visit by a reigning monarch, and 16 subsequent visits.

← (left to right) Mrs Charlotte Nattey, Mr Bob Nattey (President of the Australia-Britain Society), Mrs Jyoti Jinna, Mr Kanti Jinna (President of the Royal Commonwealth Society ACT Branch), Dr Stuart McCosker, The Hon. Penelope Wensley AC.

Wellington Branch

Branch members were invited to join with representatives from a wide range of other organisations along with political, military, civic and diplomatic leaders at a National Service of Celebration to mark The Queen's 90th birthday. In the absence of the Governor-General, who was en route to London, Dame Sian Elias, as Administrator of the Government, led the congregation in celebration. Brad Olsen, a Queen's Young Leader 2016, was one of those giving a reading. With special permission from St Paul's, London the choir performed the anthem 'I love all beauteous things' by Judith Weir, Master of The Queen's Music, commissioned by St Paul's Cathedral to mark the 90th birthday of Her Majesty The Queen.



Hong Kong Branch

Hong Kong branch celebrated HM The Queen's actual birthday in April. They celebrated in style with 74 guests and Consuls-General, a champagne toast to Her Majesty and a specially-created crown cake.



Auckland Branch

On Thursday 2 June 2016, The Queen's 90th birthday was celebrated at the 145 year old Northern Club in Auckland City. The British New Zealand Business Association partnered with The Royal Commonwealth Society, Monarchy New Zealand and the Northern Club to host a cocktail party for members, their family and friends.

The guest speaker was Dr. Sean Palmer, Chair of Monarchy New Zealand and a specialist on the role of the monarchy in the 16 Commonwealth Realms. Dr. Palmer spoke about the contemporary importance of the monarchy for the New Zealand identity and the role it plays in the New Zealand system of democratic government.



Sri Lanka Branch

On 16 June RCS Sri Lanka, together with the British High Commission in Sri Lanka organised a 90th birthday celebration in honour of HM The Queen. It was hosted by the British High Commission, and attended by HE James Dauris and Senior Ministers of the Sri Lankan government.

➤ Shiva Yogendranathan, President of RCS Sri Lanka with the British HC and Senior Ministers of the Sri Lankan Government

➔ Shiva Yogendranathan, President of RCS Sri Lanka with an Officer in Scottish attire from the British High Commission



COMING UP IN THE COMMONWEALTH

1-10 SEPTEMBER

62nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Dhaka, Bangladesh – Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

5-8 SEPTEMBER

11th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting, Samoa

12-16 SEPTEMBER

Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation Forum, Nadi, Fiji

12-16 SEPTEMBER

ACU Gender Programme, Nairobi – The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the University of Nairobi (UoN)

13-26 SEPTEMBER

71st Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 71), UN Headquarters, New York

15 SEPTEMBER

High Commissioners' Round Table 'On the Road to Brexit', RCS

18-22 SEPTEMBER

The Judiciary as Guarantors of the Rule of Law, Georgetown, Guyana – Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA)

22 SEPTEMBER

Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting, UN Headquarters, New York

3-7 OCTOBER

The Royal Commonwealth Society International Meeting, London

3-5 AND 6-7 OCTOBER

Meetings of Senior Officials of Law Ministries and of Law Ministers and Attorneys-General of Small Commonwealth Jurisdictions, Marlborough House, London

14-16 OCTOBER

24th Triennial Conference – Digital Health for Health and Wellbeing, Colombo, Sri Lanka – Commonwealth Medical Association (CMA)

27 OCTOBER

Autumn Conference – Skills for the 21st Century, University of London – Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC)

6-10 NOVEMBER

8th Commonwealth Youth Parliament, British Columbia, Canada – Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

11-12 NOVEMBER

South Wales Youth Summit; democracy workshops and Model CHOGM, Crosskeys, Gwent – RCS and RCS Wales, in collaboration with Free the Children and Coleg Gwent

27-30 NOVEMBER

8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and Open University, Malaysia

3 DECEMBER

Model Commonwealth Summit (Model CHOGM), Bath. A locally focused summit for 18-28 year-olds – RCS and RCS Bath Branch

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THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY



Cyber – The Strategic Threat

Thursday 13th October at 7.00pm – 9.30pm

Royal Yacht Britannia, Leith

You are invited to a briefing by leading experts on 'Cyber'; the risk, defence, approach to and mitigation of the effects of a cyber attack. This event combines a strategic briefing with a prestigious reception in the Royal State Rooms on the Royal Yacht.

Ed Butler CBE, DSO

Head of Risk Analysis, Pool Re

With over 30 years in the intelligence, risk management, security and business sectors, Ed's military experience spanned 9/11 and Afghanistan in 2006. He will provide a strategic overview of cyber threat.

Brian Lord OBE

Managing Director, PGI Cyber

Formerly with GCHQ for 21 years as their Deputy Director for Intelligence and Cyber Operations, Brian is a leading thinker on cyber threat and will explain strategizing to defend your own organisation.

Michael Patrick

Partner, Farrer & Co

Mike advises on a range of issues including cyber security, data protection, privacy, defamation, harassment and blackmail. Mike will advise on the legal aspects of cyber threat.

Tickets: £65.00 pp (including VAT) and are strictly limited.

Please contact Robin Ashcroft, robin.ashcroft@commonwealthargosy.com, to reserve your place.



A new name, a new look with the same dedication and commitment

Set up as a charity in 1967, the Commonwealth Girls Education Fund – formerly known as the Commonwealth Countries League Education Fund (CCLEF) – celebrates 50 years of commitment and dedication to Commonwealth girls' secondary education throughout 2017.

We believe that when we educate a girl, we can help change a community. The average annual grant costs £400 per girl, including administration costs.

During 2015/16, this charity sponsored 382 capable girls through secondary schools in 30 Commonwealth countries, empowering and enabling them to become agents of positive change in their own communities and beyond.

With our new name and refreshed website www.cgefund.org, we hope you are inspired by the work that we do, and support us through our events, activities, sponsorships or donations to provide the basic right of education to many more girls.



**EDUCATE A GIRL
EMPOWER A WOMAN
INSPIRE A COMMUNITY
CHANGE LIVES**



THE QUEEN'S YOUNG LEADERS

Award Ceremony and
UK residential programme
June 2016



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THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

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Photography: where not specified, please refer to RCS



Editor: Hilary Greengrass
Design: RF Design UK Ltd
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Print: Impress Print Services Ltd
www.impressprint.net
Cover image: iStock & Shutterstock
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