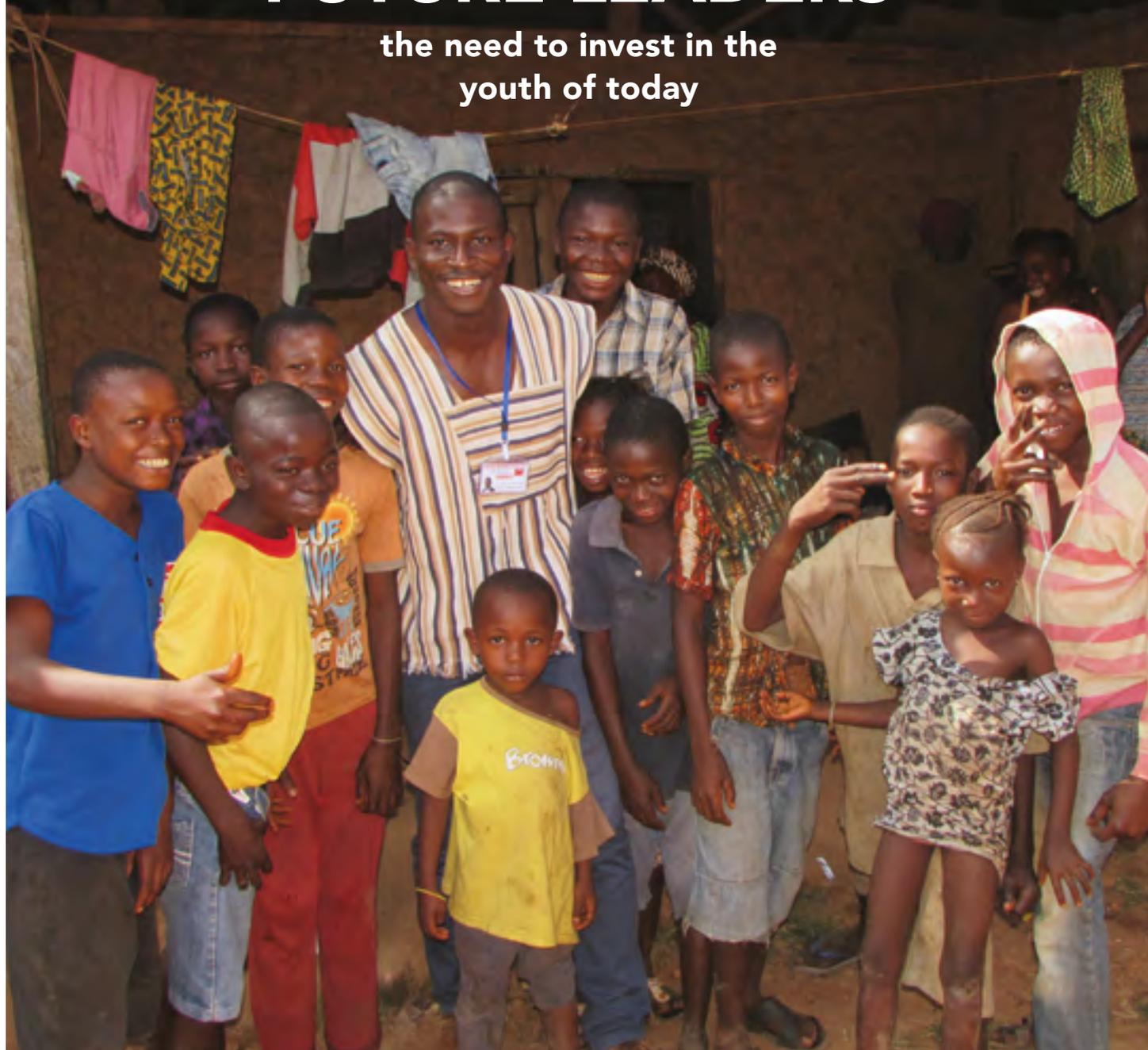


VOICES

THE COMMONWEALTH'S FUTURE LEADERS

the need to invest in the
youth of today



 **WOMEN IN SRI LANKA:**
Their essential contribution
to the peace process

 **COMMONWEALTH DAY:**
Nations celebrate and launch
'A Young Commonwealth'

 **CLIMATE CHANGE:**
Coral reefs in
Commonwealth waters



COMMONWEALTH CYBERSECURITY FORUM 2015

22 - 24 APRIL 2015, LONDON, UK

Securing Cyberspace for Social and Economic Development



DATES

22 – 24 April 2015

VENUE

BT Centre, London

WEBSITE

[www.cto.int/events/
upcoming-events/
commonwealth-
cybersecurity-forum-2015/](http://www.cto.int/events/upcoming-events/commonwealth-cybersecurity-forum-2015/)

EMAIL

events@cto.int

Safety, security and resilience are central to realise the socio-economic benefits of the Cyberspace. Effective Cybersecurity requires multilateral cooperation and harmonised action. The Commonwealth Cybersecurity Forum brings together stakeholders from across the Commonwealth and beyond, builds capacity, presents innovative technologies, showcases expertise and fosters relationships. More importantly it will map out the future cooperation among Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries in Cybersecurity.

About the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation

The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) is an international organisation based in London and established through a Headquarters Agreement with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

It is the oldest and largest Commonwealth organisation engaged in multilateral collaboration in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and uses its experience and expertise to support its members in integrating ICTs to deliver effective development interventions that

emancipate, enrich, equalise and empower people within the Commonwealth and beyond. The Organisation's 2012/13-2015/16 Strategic Plan highlights six priority areas on which the organisation will be placing particular emphasis:

- Broadband, especially mobile broadband for rural development (including food security)

- Cybersecurity and cybercrime
- ICTs for people with disabilities
- Regulatory environments (including convergence and digital broadcasting switchover)
- The use of ICTs in education, with particular reference to skills development and entrepreneurship
- Youth and ICTs.



COMMONWEALTH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION

WELCOME



Welcome to a growing family. The world is full of important international institutions, each with its specific mission.

But you will find here something different. You will find the voices and views, not of officialdom but of peoples, of a common family – a family which is determined to see

that every single one of its members, in all its network of 53 member states, young and old, male and female, have equal rights, equal respect and equal opportunities.

The communications revolution is connecting this family more closely than ever. New branches of the RCS are opening round the globe. Shortly the RCS will be holding a conference in Malta to give further powerful impetus to gender equality and fuller opportunities and freedom for the younger generation to build their own better future through skills and enterprise.

The end of oppression and discrimination against women, the end of barriers to youth advancement – these are the key ingredients of healthy societies and future peace and prosperity. Gender equality becomes the centre of the growth agenda. The voices of the Commonwealth's 2.3 billion people can and must lead the way.

Lord Howell of Guildford
President, The Royal Commonwealth Society



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

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THE COMMONWEALTH'S NEW PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Recent meetings on gender equality in New York offer an opportunity for reflection on the Commonwealth's progress in this area, and its next steps...

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women was a unique moment in history, leading to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights. This year's UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held in March, provided an opportunity to revisit the Beijing declaration twenty years after it was first negotiated. The Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action (CGPA) runs until 2015, making this year equally crucial for the Commonwealth to reflect on its progress on gender equality, and to decide on a new plan of action to make gender equality a reality.

Given that the Commonwealth holds a series of meetings on gender issues in the fringes of CSW, including the meeting of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG), it is a key time to review and renew frameworks for action on gender equality.

It is disappointing then, that no new plan of action for gender equality was tabled at the recent meetings in New York, and that this agenda will seemingly not be revisited until 2017.

It is of course important that progress on gender equality is measured before moving ahead with a new agenda. To this end, the Commonwealth Secretariat is undertaking a comprehensive review of progress on the CGPA. The report will be available later this year, however, the approval process will take considerably

longer. The report will be reviewed by Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers when they meet in June 2016, and then by Heads of Government in November 2017. This leaves a gap of two years in which the Commonwealth will seemingly have no framework for gender work.

With the post-2015 sustainable development goals also to be decided this year, there are those who argue that the Commonwealth doesn't need a new CGPA, claiming that it will simply create another reporting mechanism, more bureaucracy, and increased expenditure. The Commonwealth could simply align itself to whatever is negotiated on gender in the sustainable development goals. This might well be the best course of action, ensuring that Commonwealth priorities align with broader international priorities. However, this does not negate the need for a formalised framework explaining the Commonwealth's gender priorities and targets. Without such a framework, member states and the Secretariat cannot be held accountable for their progress on gender equality.

Whatever the framework looks like, the Commonwealth must have a transparent plan of action on gender equality in place by the end of this year, if only to cover the gap until 2017. In this interim two years, the Commonwealth could show leadership on gender issues and create a CGPA that goes further than ever before to make gender equality a reality in the Commonwealth.

In order to make sure the Commonwealth achieves this, civil society must remain strong in its call for action on gender equality. The Royal Commonwealth Society will continue its work to achieve gender equality, and as a further contribution is launching the Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network, which will unite and strengthen the voices of young activists working towards this goal.



ABOVE: Sphere within Sphere, bronze sculpture, Arnaldo Pomodoro

CYPRUS

A EUROPEAN ISLAND IN THE COMMONWEALTH

HE Euripides L Evriviades is the High Commissioner of Cyprus to the UK. His notable diplomatic career has included roles as Ambassador to the USA, the Netherlands and to Israel.



The chief architect of European unity, Jean Monnet, argued during the creation of the European Economic Community that “we are not building a Coalition of States but a Union of Peoples.” His vision profoundly encapsulates the values and principles not only of the European Union (EU), but of the Commonwealth (CW) as well. During its long existence, the CW has been a force for good. Despite ups and downs, it has been promoting mutually shared objectives such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, trade and economic development. CW and EU values have thus much in common. Do the CW and the EU have ways to go to become more relevant to their citizens? They most certainly do.

Pulled by the strong ideational and structural forces of the CW and the EU, Cyprus joined the two organisations in 1961 and 2004, respectively. Both were strategically important choices. Cyprus is one of the three states, together with Malta and the United Kingdom, which belongs to both institutions.

Membership of these two families is not contradictory or mutually exclusive. It is a fallacy to suggest so, as some do, within the context of the EU debate in the UK. All CW countries belong to regional organisations; and there is complementarity and mutual enrichment that results from this.

Membership of the EU has its obvious advantages for Cyprus; but in many

ways, the CW is its natural family, given the commonalities of a working language and legal systems and institutions. The CW offers Cyprus access to a substantial global network, especially to countries where it does not have a diplomatic or consular presence. The network is also useful when Cyprus is in the running for election to UN bodies. Politically, my homeland has always enjoyed the solidarity and support of the CW. Along with the other two EU member states of the CW, Cyprus can bring to the EU the CW perspective for the benefit of the peoples of the CW, be it on climate change, education, youth and women’s empowerment, trade and development, to mention but a few. Perhaps an institutionalised, mutually beneficial dialogue between the EU and the CW can be established.

Experiences of life differ widely. We each make our contributions from very different ‘weltanschauungs’ and backgrounds. Despite this reality, we are all committed to the same goals and to a common purpose: to address in practical and tangible terms, the concerns of the citizens of member states of the CW and in particular of the small and vulnerable, and to help each other build a brighter and united future for ourselves and for our children. This is more poignant in an overly interdependent global village. And for the CW family of more than two billion people, of which over 60% are under the age of 30, it is our responsibility to build the future right. The challenge, as in the EU, is to turn vision and policies into praxis.

Being a member of both organisations, gives Cyprus the opportunity and the vantage point to be active in various discussions related to building a brighter future for the generations to come. Cyprus has been an active member of the CW, having hosted the CHOGM in 1993, several ministerial meetings, and currently serving in the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group. Cyprus accepts the responsibilities and challenges associated with the double role that it can play and is ready and determined to offer its own contributions and assistance within the EU for the development and well-being of our fellow partners in the Commonwealth.

WOMEN IN PEACE: PERSPECTIVES FROM SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is a country emerging from the throes of a three-decade conflict that concluded in 2009. The struggle destroyed families and communities beyond recognition and systematically damaged infrastructure, land and property. The psychological trauma among men, women, and children has been immeasurable. **Salma Yusuf** looks at the important role women must play in putting the pieces back together.



The war prompted many women to take on public roles in civic organisations. The Mothers' Front in the northeast and south protested against disappearances, abductions, arbitrary arrests and the killing of their sons in the 1990s. Moving beyond years of ethnic tensions, these Tamil and Sinhala mothers were willing to work together for the sake of their disappeared children. Other women became grassroots peacemakers, actively involved in mediating violence and seeking peaceful solutions. Still more, such as the Mothers and Daughters of Lanka, have been active for years promoting women's rights. Yet despite women's increased participation in civic and political spheres, women remain largely absent from official peacebuilding and decision-making structures.

More than 50 percent of peace agreements fail within five years of signature. In part, this is because negotiations and accords often do not address the underlying causes

of conflict or seek to prevent its resurgence. It is also because talks suffer from the absence of women. Though governments and multilateral organisations acknowledge the critical role women play in peacebuilding, they remain largely absent from high-level

“*Women remain largely absent from high-level international peace negotiations and from peace talks around the globe.*”

international peace negotiations and from peace talks around the globe. In 2010, the UN Development Fund for Women found that women comprise less than 10 percent of negotiators and less than 3 percent of the signatories to peace agreements. The UN has never appointed a woman as chief mediator.

Women have proven time and again that their presence can have a significant impact on peace processes – as has been shown in Sierra Leone, Bougainville, Uganda and Northern Ireland. Women's peace efforts can challenge unhealthy dynamics, such as ingrained mistrusts and divisions and exclusionary politics, by advocating consensus building instead of recrimination, and inclusion instead of elitist politics. A key strategy that has been used by women's groups the world over is to take a non-partisan, unified and

“*It is critical to accept that just as war is a gendered concept, so is peace a gendered process.*”

consensus-based approach to achieve influence. Women's groups can broaden the range of substantive issues on the table, promoting not just women's rights but also social justice. Women activists also promote a vision of peace that goes beyond the negotiating table. In the light of these valuable contributions, assistance to peace processes and practice needs to be re-thought so that women are better supported and integrated. Practical and logistical support can play an important role in facilitating participation

in some cases; political support is almost always required.

The first formal space for Sri Lankan women to participate in a formal peace process was established with the peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) – the Sub Committee for Gender Issues (SGI) reported directly to the plenary of the peace talks. The SGI carried with it notable potential and positive outcomes for women. These included the sharing of experiences and strategies and the potential for shaping policy interventions in key arenas of marginalisation for both LTTE women and the women/feminists from the women's movement. Yet, while the SGI must be hailed as a significant achievement for women's autonomy, it was constrained by

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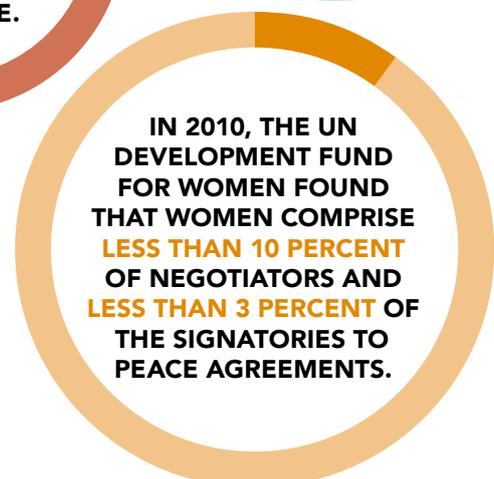
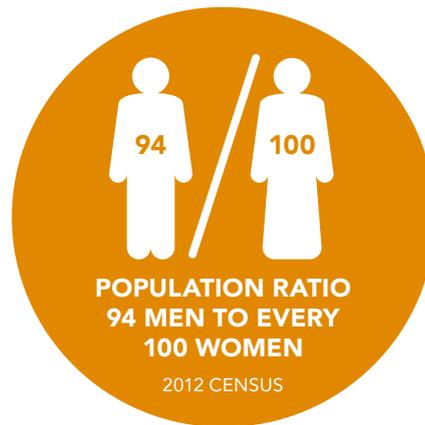
To achieve change, women must first be accepted as political decision makers.”

a mandate of providing advisory input only. This made women's voices and aspirations still dependent on the political will of both parties to the negotiations, namely, the LTTE and the Government.

For peace to be sustainable it requires structural change towards greater levels of inclusion and participation. This means going beyond expressing women's immediate and practical needs or simply promoting quotas. New political structures and practices are needed in which the involvement of women as decision-makers is accepted as legitimate and normal. It is critical to accept that just as war is a gendered concept, so is peace a gendered process. Experiences from conflict-ridden contexts have shown how women describe a view of peace as holistic and inclusive. Involving women in peace processes, on their terms, will help to ground settlements and ensure their sustainability. It is time to ratchet up efforts to ensure that women in Sri Lanka not only speak out on women's issues but also on national issues.

MORE INFORMATION

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COMMONWEALTH DIASPORA DIALOGUES

ENGAGING SRI LANKA'S YOUTH DIASPORA IN PEACEBUILDING

In February 2015, a group of second-generation young British-Sri Lankan adults, accompanied by the Royal Commonwealth Society, participated in the programme 'Our Sri Lanka 2025'. Here follows the Society's review of its work with emerging young leaders from the diaspora.



Since 2011, the RCS's Commonwealth Diaspora Dialogues programme has been running in partnership with International Alert, one of the world's leading peacebuilding organisations. The programme aims to challenge perceptions concerning the diaspora and support participation of young adults in peacebuilding initiatives in Sri Lanka and within the diaspora community in UK.

The background to this initiative is the nearly thirty years of civil war conflict in Sri Lanka. More than a generation of Sri Lankans have grown up with no experience of peace, and in the overseas diaspora, ethnic and religious tensions have characterised communal relations in host countries, reflecting the conflict 'back home'. In Sri Lanka the diaspora have often been seen as a negative influence by the state, media, policy-makers and the wider public, and its diversity and potential role in peacebuilding is rarely acknowledged.

Supporting Emerging Leaders

Diaspora Dialogues aims to support the emergence locally, nationally and internationally of young civil society and political leaders from diverse backgrounds

who are committed to inter-communal and faith dialogue and promoting a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Sri Lanka. Programmes have been designed to develop inter-cultural skills and greater understanding between Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim young adults, both in UK and Sri Lanka, and explore their role in peacebuilding. A further dimension has brought together cross-party groups of young Sri Lankan parliamentarians to explore UK governance and democracy models and engage with the UK-based diaspora to confidence-build. Young Sri Lankan MPs also participated in panel sessions on peacebuilding and reconciliation at the 2013 Commonwealth Youth Forum and 2014 World Conference of Youth, and UK diaspora youth leaders ran workshops.

“
It is important for young people in Sri Lanka to engage with the diaspora to ensure sustainable peace in the country.”

Shehan Semasinghe MP, Young Political Leaders Forum of Sri Lanka

Importance of Interchange

Beginning in December 2011, Diaspora Dialogues has been constructed around a series of inter-change visits to enable dialogue on the theme of 'youth, reconciliation and development'. Such face-to-face contact is vital for acknowledging different perspectives. As Jayan Perera of ARC reflects: "Before I came to Sri Lanka I used to think I knew a lot about the country, through what I read and heard on the media. But once I came here I understood how different things are. There is a need to change perceptions, and we want to influence and bring about a change that can affect all communities in a positive manner."



© International Alert

Building lasting relationships

The RCS/International Alert-coordinated UK-Sri Lanka visits have given rise to two new organisations, formed by British young professionals of second generation Sri Lankan heritage – ARC (Achieving Real Change) and VfR (Voices for Reconciliation). By utilising their professional skills in areas such as healthcare, business and sports they support professional development activities with partners to help improve lives in Sri Lanka. On return, the RCS has facilitated presentation events, including in Parliament, for participants to share experiences and advocate for greater and more sustained diaspora engagement in Sri Lanka's post-war development and reconciliation process. As Maynaha Indrakumar from ARC explains:

“

As the diaspora, we believe we can play a constructive role in creating positive links between UK and Sri Lanka by working with like-minded young professionals from various ethnic backgrounds in both countries, to engage and bring about social cohesion.”

A new peacebuilding opportunity?

The presidential election on January 8th led to a shock defeat for incumbent president Mahinda Rajapaksa and the voting in of a new president, Maithripala Sirisena. Parliamentary elections are due to be held in April. There are hopes that these elections will usher in democratic reforms that will safeguard the involvement of all regional,

ethnic and religious voices and open up space for critically discussing government policy and issues of reconciliation.

Our Sri Lanka 2025

In February 2015 the RCS enabled young adults from ARC, VfR and the Tutu Foundation London to showcase their work at 'Our Sri Lanka 2025: Engaging people of Sri Lankan origin overseas'. This two-day event capitalised on the more conducive political environment and openness of Sri Lankan decision-makers to work positively with the diaspora for peace. Attended by government Ministers and representatives of civil society and the private sector, overseas participants shared how to harness the skills and expertise of the diaspora for positive development and reconciliation. External actors can play a positive role in reconciliation, and the experience of other Commonwealth nations, such as South Africa, could be helpful.

Civil paths to peace

Diaspora Dialogues highlights how the diaspora experience is affected by conflict in their countries of origin but that it is possible to mobilise for international engagement on development and peacebuilding. It provides important learning for the Commonwealth's respect and understanding agenda. Civil society must play an important role in community development and social cohesion, and young adults have a vital leadership role in this process.

MORE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ALERT

International Alert is a peacebuilding organisation which is helping people to find peaceful solutions to conflict in over 25 countries. Visit www.international-alert.org

LEFT: Second-generation British Sri Lankans showcase their work at Our Sri Lanka 2025

RIGHT: Jayan Perera of ARC advocates greater diaspora involvement in development

COMMONWEALTH DAY OBSERVANCE WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Commemorated annually on the second Monday of March, Commonwealth Day is marked around the Commonwealth, celebrating the unity, diversity and linkages of the modern Commonwealth and fostering greater understanding of the Commonwealth's achievements and role.



On 9th March in London, the Commonwealth Day Observance at Westminster Abbey was organised by the Royal Commonwealth Society. The multi-faith event took place in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth and Their Royal Highnesses The Duke of Edinburgh, The Prince of Wales, The Duchess of Cornwall, and The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. It was attended by some 2,000 people, diplomats, politicians and dignitaries from around the Commonwealth, and 1,000 young people from schools across the UK.

Featuring a vibrant mixture of testimonies, performances and readings, the Observance launched the annual Commonwealth theme which, for 2015, is 'A Young Commonwealth'. People under thirty account for the majority of the Commonwealth's population, and play

a vital role at the heart of sustainable development and democracy. The theme recognises the capacity, contribution and potential of young people, particularly in 2015 when the world will define a new global development framework.

Speakers at the 2015 Observance included Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, whose tireless campaigning for children's rights has freed over 80,000 children from modern slavery; PJ Cole, a Queen's Young Leader Winner (see page 10) who has been working with former child soldiers to tackle the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone; and Dr Shirin Chaudhury, the first female Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, former Bangladesh Minister for Women and Children, and Chair of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

There were readings from HE Kamallesh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General, and Barkha Mossae, a Queen's Young Leader winner from Mauritius. Sharanya Manivannan, a young Indian poet, read her poem 'Gathering', and South African multi-award-winning acapella trio, The Soil, gave a moving rendition of 'We Are One'.

Reflecting on the continued importance of the Commonwealth, HM The Queen said: "what we share through being members of the Commonwealth is more important and worthy of protection than perhaps at any other time in the Commonwealth's existence. We are guardians of a precious flame, and it is our duty not only to keep it burning brightly, but to keep it replenished for the decades ahead...the Commonwealth can only flourish if its ideas and ideals continue to be young and fresh and relevant to all generations."

SPEECH BY MR KAILASH SATYARTHI

Nobel Peace Prize winner



**Commonwealth Day Observance,
Westminster Abbey, 9 March 2015**

“ My dear children, Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, dear sisters and brothers.

The power of youth is the power of the world. The power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world. The faces of young people are the faces of our past, our present and our future. No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of the young people. Therefore, I would like to applaud the Royal Commonwealth Society for promoting Young Commonwealth and for encouraging the participation and leadership of young people and engaging them for a better Commonwealth.

Friends, whenever and wherever we fail our children, we fail our self.

It's an irony that now when we speak here, [a] hundred and seventy million children in the world are languishing in child labour and dozens of millions live in Commonwealth countries. The children are sold and bought like animals and even less a price than the animals. The children are forced to become child soldiers. Many of the goods we use are made by children in slavery in some parts of the world. This is unacceptable. I refuse to accept that the Commonwealth nations are so incapable, they are so poor they have lack...they don't have that compassion that can put an end to child slavery in our countries, that can wipe out the scourge from the face of humankind. I refuse to accept.

We can make the change. And it is happening.

One of those 83,000 children whom I freed from bonded labour and child labour, was a six-year-old girl, Devali. She was born and grew up in stone mining. She was very bright. Thanks to the laws and schemes in India, we have helped her to get education. And one day, she has shown her leadership. She was addressing the world leaders at the

United Nations in one of the side meetings on education a few years ago. And she challenged the whole world that, look, I was able to educate all my colleagues in my neighbourhood. She brought 36 children to schools, withdrawing them from child labour and exploitation. So she asked the leaders that if I can do [this], being a former child slave, if I can do [this], being a tiny child, what about you, the leaders? Can't you make it? That was the moral challenge from a child.

Friends, change is knocking on our doors.

Listen to the young people, listen. Listen, they are rising up against the status quo. They are challenging the age-old mind-set. Look at the girls in many parts of the world who are rising up against child marriages. Boys and girls are fighting for education, they are demanding better life, better freedom. We have to listen to them.

The governments must invest more on education, healthcare and protection. We must be more proactive in Commonwealth countries, build partnerships – genuine partnerships – not only among the countries and governments but also with the people, with the communities, with the societies, with NGOs, with the businesses. We have to find a way and we have to put an end to this scourge of the exploitation of young people and children.

Today is the time.

Today is the day, now is the time. Act. I call upon your compassion which is inside all of you. No one else could be the better person to lead us, to guide us, to bless us, to support us than Your Majesty here.

Friends, we have to make the Commonwealth free from child slavery. Thank you very much. ”

MORE INFORMATION
Save the Childhood Movement
www.bba.org.in

INVESTING IN YOUTH THE COMMONWEALTH'S FUTURE LEADERS

PJ Cole trains and mobilises community leaders in Sierra Leone. He is a winner of the Queen's Young Leaders Award and is the Executive Director of Lifeline Nehemiah Projects. This is his challenge to the Commonwealth Community...



I was honoured to address the Queen and leaders from around the world at the Commonwealth Day Observance at Westminster Abbey on 9th March. As a recipient of the Queen's Young Leaders Award I was keen to share my own experience of how young people can lead positive change in their communities and nations.

This year's Commonwealth theme is 'A Young Commonwealth' and the message I gave in my address was clear: we have a huge responsibility to invest in our young people, whatever barriers they face. I head up LifeLine Nehemiah Projects, a charity based in Sierra Leone, and my team works daily with young people who show great promise and determination in the face of adversity. Added to the economic and social challenges that many face, the Ebola epidemic that has hit Sierra Leone so hard over the past few months has left over 12,000 children orphaned. To many, these young people are the unfortunate victims of circumstance, but we are choosing to see them differently.

We believe that, with the right investment, these children will be the future leaders of our country. It is a bold statement, but this conviction is rooted in my own experience – I have seen children like these before. I was a child myself when the brutal civil war blighted Sierra Leone. These were very

difficult times – nowhere was safe from rebel fighters. Children were stolen from their families, had to live in the bush in fear of their lives, and were forced to commit all manner of atrocities.

My parents were so moved by the plight of these child soldiers that over the next few years they rescued and invited over 800 children into our lives. All were victims of war, pulled out of the conflict and into our home. I shared my clothes, food and parents with them. We were not a wealthy family, but my parents gave what they had. They often had no idea where they would get enough food from, or where all these children would sleep, but they made it work because they cared so much.

These children had done some horrendous things. Many people were afraid of them, and some pitied them. But my father, the late Richard Cole, saw them differently. He had a vision, that with the right support, these children would become the people to rebuild Sierra Leone after the war. In 1996, in partnership with UK charity LifeLine Network International, he set up LifeLine Nehemiah Projects to offer these children a safe home, an education and a family.

Today, many of these ex-child soldiers are part of the LifeLine Nehemiah Projects team, working alongside me to run four schools, a safe home for vulnerable children and a vocational training centre. We are also working with farmers, running businesses and doing everything we can to bring economic and social restoration to Sierra Leone. These young leaders are real life evidence that long-term care and mentoring can turn the most disadvantaged and traumatised children into adults of vision and integrity.



Lifeline Nehemiah
Projects

When the Ebola epidemic hit our community in the summer of 2014, we knew we had a responsibility to lead the fight against the disease. We initiated an education programme that has reached 68,261 people with life-saving knowledge, has provided essential supplies and support to over 9,887 quarantined individuals and which became part of the National Ebola Response Committee. Working in partnership with LifeLine Network International, Medair, and UK AID we have built an Ebola Clinic which has treated 171 people in the last ten weeks.

But the project that I am most excited about is the building work going on at our safe home. We are taking in children who have been orphaned by Ebola and are creating extra space and beds to house many more. I know that as we support and care for each child, we will give them the chance to overcome the disadvantages they face and to forge a new identity.

Across the Commonwealth, 60% of the population is under the age of 30, and this figure will continue to increase. Sadly, many of these young people do not currently have the basic opportunities we want them to have – education, a safe home, protection from abuse. The challenge I raise is for us all to see the young people that dominate the Commonwealth, in the way that my father saw the child soldiers who now mentor, manage and lead our work in Freetown. If we take the opportunity to invest in them, there is great hope for the next generation.

MORE INFORMATION

 Visit www.thenehemiahproject.org.uk

 Follow PJ on twitter: @mandewacole

IMAGES

FRONT COVER: PJ Cole, Queen's Young Leader, with children in Punduru Village, where Lifeline Nehemiah Projects runs a school and works with farmers

TOP: PJ Cole with farmers discussing plans for new farming project

MIDDLE LEFT: Vocational trainee mechanic, Fatmata Tarawalie, at work

MIDDLE RIGHT: PJ Cole moving medical supplies for the newly built Ebola Community Clinic

BOTTOM: Assembly at a local primary school



Goodenough College to host the Queen's Young Leaders



Goodenough College has long and inextricable links with the Commonwealth so it is entirely appropriate that the Queen's Young Leaders will make this their base during their London visit in June.

Founded in 1931 as a residence for men from the then British Dominions studying in London, Goodenough College is an independent educational charity and home to outstanding international postgraduate students and their families. Members study every discipline at all of the universities and colleges in London. The College now accepts both men and women from all over the world; it currently has 700 Members from 80 countries with at least 50% coming from the Commonwealth.

Situated in a beautiful central London garden square, Goodenough College's mission is to 'develop future leaders ... irrespective of background, where mutual understanding

and respect are fostered and intellectual, cultural and social interactions are nurtured.' At the heart of College life is a thriving extra-curricular programme.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the College's patron and has maintained a constant interest in the life of its Members since 1950. She visits regularly, most recently for the College's 80th Anniversary celebrations in 2011.

Members enjoy attending Commonwealth events held in London and many have played representative sports for Commonwealth teams.

The College works with other Commonwealth affiliated societies and scholarship bodies, including The Windle Trust, Cumberland Lodge and the Royal Over-Seas

League. Goodenough has many notable Alumni including the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, previous South African President, F. W. de Klerk and the current First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones.

The Goodenough Club is adjacent to the College, providing 4* visitor accommodation and allowing guests to experience life at the College during their visit as they may eat breakfast and dinner in the prestigious Great Hall (photographed above). The Queen's Young Leaders will stay in the Goodenough Club during their time in London and will be welcomed wholeheartedly into the Goodenough community.

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www.goodenough.ac.uk

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

The Commonwealth has long been known for the work of the 'Commonwealth family', its network of seventy plus organisations that represent the Commonwealth brand and advocate its values globally. This network is invaluable to the Commonwealth, with its specialist knowledge and key connections in diverse areas, from local government to forestry.

It is for this reason that the Commonwealth Secretariat has created a dedicated Strategic Partnerships team within the Secretary-General's office. Recognising the significant contribution that the 'Commonwealth family' can make through enhanced engagement between the Secretariat and this network, the team will work exclusively towards achieving this.

Over the coming months and years levels of engagement with the network will increase. A meeting on the 14th May this year will gather together all of the accredited organisations and will provide attendees with an opportunity to hear more about the current work of the Secretariat, including its work on youth, its current strategic priorities and the plans for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta later this year. Likewise, the Commonwealth family will be invited

to make contributions on the participation of civil society in Ministerial Meetings convened by the Secretariat.

A 'Commonwealth Connects' space for this network is currently in development, and will provide a dedicated online interactive platform for collaboration. The platform will allow information-sharing between the Secretariat and its family of organisations, including a dynamic calendar outlining upcoming relevant events. It will also provide a space for the 'Commonwealth family' to promote their own work and will encourage idea sharing through a discussion forum.

Lastly, the Commonwealth Secretariat will be looking to work in partnership with those accredited organisations that are undertaking projects in areas of current priority to the Secretariat, as outlined in its Strategic Plan for 2013-17. These include democracy, institution-building, social development, youth, governance, pan-Commonwealth development and the development of small and vulnerable states. Working in partnership in these areas will, it is envisaged, increase the impact and visibility of both the Commonwealth Secretariat's work and that of its Commonwealth family partners.



The Commonwealth

MORE INFORMATION

Commonwealth accredited organisations should contact the Partnerships Support Officer, Emma Kerr (e.kerr@commonwealth.int). A full list of Commonwealth family members can be found at: www.thecommonwealth.org/organisation-directory

MAPPING COMMONWEALTH MIGRATIONS

Manchester Business School has undertaken a fascinating new project, mapping pan-Commonwealth migration trends. Doctoral Researcher, **Ali Bayat**, talks us through the project's progress so far.



Mapping the Commonwealth Migrations is an exciting project. We are analysing the data to see how populations have moved between Commonwealth nations. It helps us to understand and define the true nature of the Commonwealth today. Where are its populations? Where are its shared populations? Where are there areas of great cultural interaction? Where is new social capital being built? Inside the numeric data are literally millions of stories of households shifted, relationships broken and forged, and connections maintained.

The project involves collecting, analysing, visualising and interpreting migration data within the Commonwealth. At the core of the project is the creation of a comprehensive dataset that comprises yearly information on population movement between Commonwealth nations. For the initial phase of the project, the various sources of relevant data have been monitored and identified and appropriate data files collected from the World Bank website. The data has then been coded in a way to visualise a broad picture of migration within the Commonwealth covering the 1960-2000 time-span.

As the project develops, we will build more data and functionality. There are many questions that can be addressed. One example is to consider Commonwealth

trends associated with the rise of 'emerging economies'. For example, do migration patterns to or from countries like India, Singapore, South Africa and Nigeria mirror economic patterns within these countries? Another example is to consider the UK and its role as an interface to the EU. Whilst policy has shifted from open movement within the Commonwealth to open movement within the EU, there are still questions about how this policy change shows up in the data.

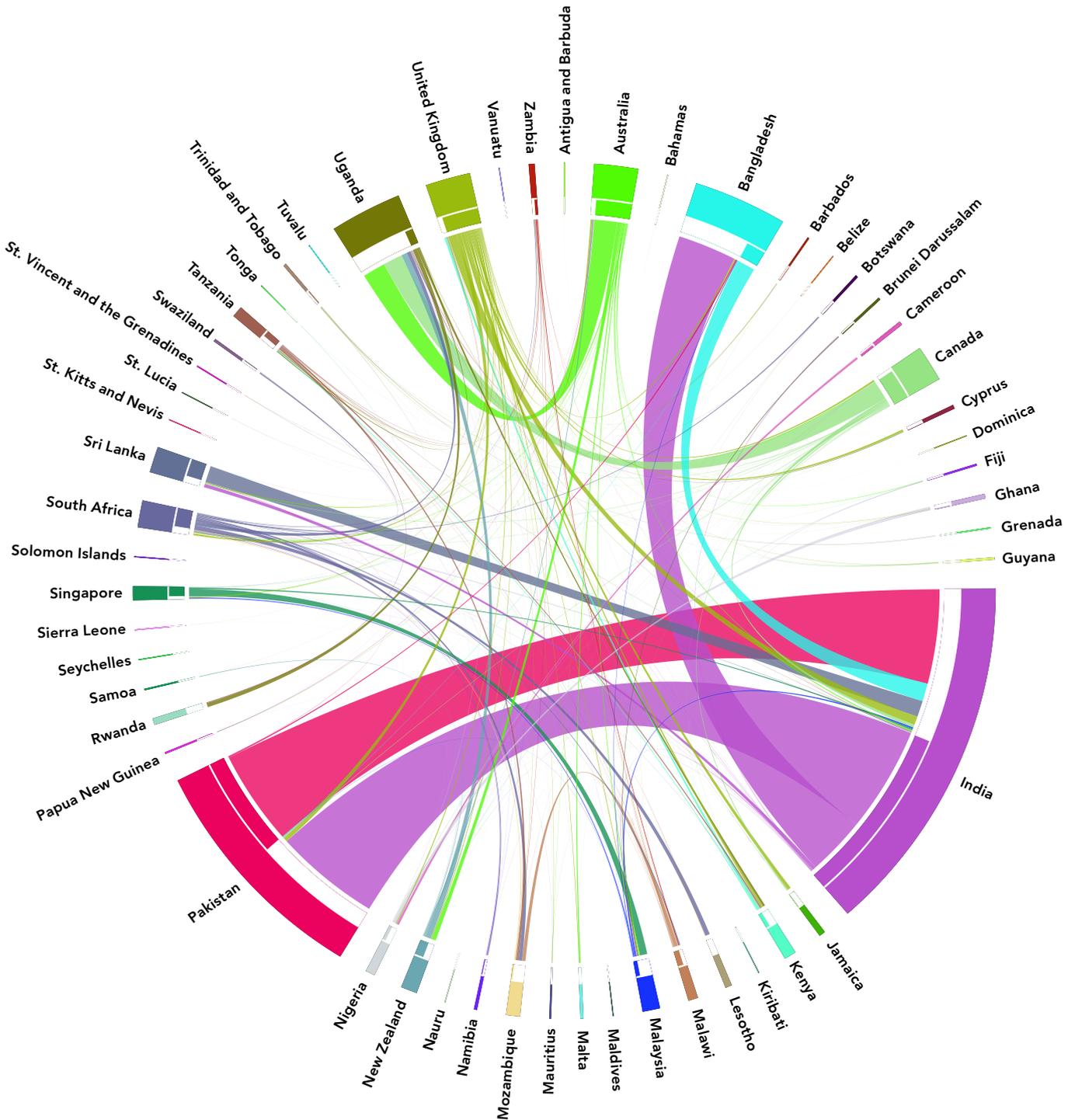
As the project develops, we will add to the existing dataset by considering yearly migration data between different nations. We will utilise various visualisation methods to create a unified and interactive simulation that can display the movement between different nations within the Commonwealth.

MAPPING COMMONWEALTH MIGRATION

In the graphic opposite, every country is represented by a colour. The inward migration to that country from 1960-2000 is represented by the same colour. The proportion of a country's migration taken up by white colour, illustrates all the outward migration going to other countries. The size of the space for inward/outward is in terms of percentage.

MORE INFORMATION

This project is led by Peter Kawalek and Ali Bayat at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. Enquiries: ali.bayat@postgrad.mbs.ac.uk



Examples of interesting insights that can be extracted from the graph:

- Migration to the UK, Australia and Canada is much higher than migration from these countries.
- India had the largest migration history from 1960-2000 in terms of both inward and outward movement.
- Almost all the migration to India was from Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- South Africa and the United Kingdom were the most diverse in terms of immigration (people from many different countries chose to migrate and live in the UK and South Africa).

THE COMMONWEALTH CLIMATE CHANGE AND CORAL REEFS

It is a true saying that the Commonwealth cannot negotiate for the world but can help the world to negotiate. **Terry Dormer** considers coral reefs in Commonwealth waters as indicators of climate change.



ABOVE: Terry Dormer photographing clownfish

The 1989 Holdgate report on global warming is a case in point. The impetus for this report can be traced to a speech by President Gayoom of the Maldives to Commonwealth heads of government at their meeting in Vancouver in October 1987. In it, he indicated that there was growing scientific evidence that sea levels would probably rise by up to six feet during the next 100 years, unless adequate measures were taken to address the situation.

The Holdgate report represented a much praised input to the newly established United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In 1989, the Commonwealth's Langkawi Declaration on the Environment continued the development of international awareness of global warming and was particularly important in underpinning the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Since then, the Commonwealth has remained active in this field, by means of a broad range of initiatives.

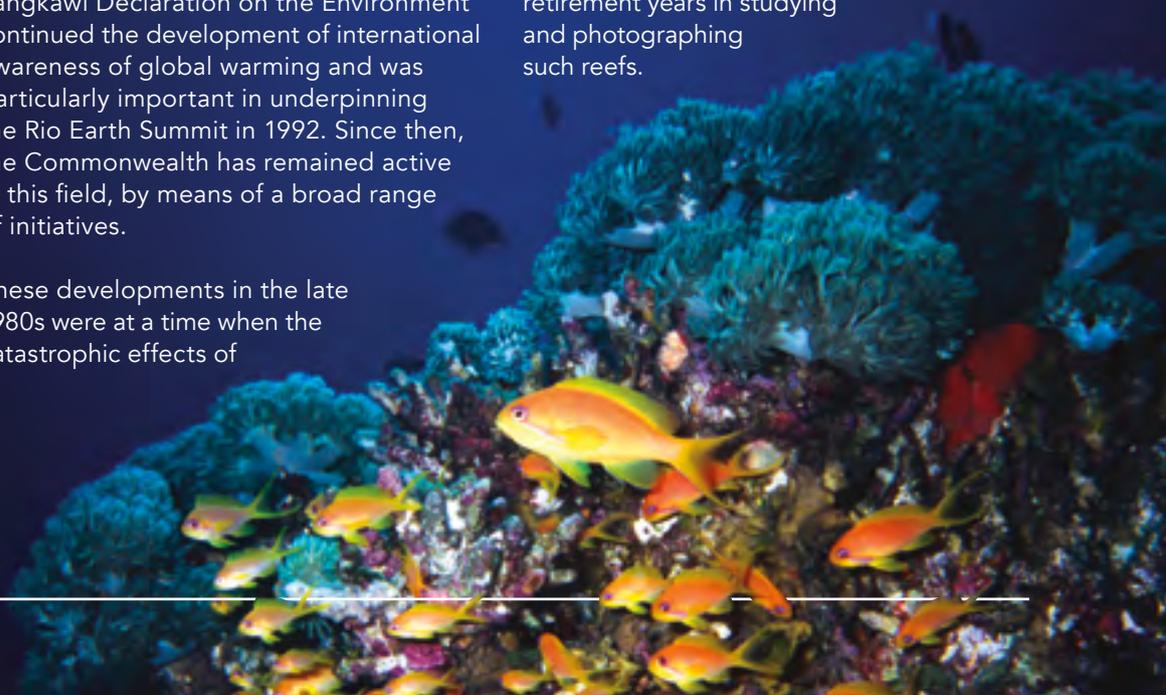
These developments in the late 1980s were at a time when the catastrophic effects of

climate change were only beginning to be understood. Two decades later, the dangers were more generally acknowledged by the scientific community – but major efforts were still needed to ensure that they were appreciated by the general public.

The Maldives again took the lead. In a dramatic and successful attempt to gain media attention, that small Commonwealth state held a cabinet meeting underwater on 17 October 2009. While submerged, ministers signed a document urging all nations to cut their carbon emissions.

Today, the Commonwealth could build significantly on its proven commitments to overcoming the grave problems which humanity faces because of global warming.

A good starting point might well be found in efforts to preserve coral reefs. Here I must declare a personal interest, as I have spent a considerable part of my retirement years in studying and photographing such reefs.





Amongst the most biodiverse places on Earth, coral reefs share with a number of other species-rich ecosystems – notably tropical rainforests – the three main conditions which encourage a teeming range of living things; namely optimum levels of warmth, wetness and sunlight. The loss of such habitats is one of the many aspects of the accelerating rate of environmental destruction which is such a troubling feature of the impact of human activity on the natural world.

Coral reefs cover hundreds of thousands of square kilometres and are believed to be the habitats of over a million species. Made by billions of tiny animals, they build vast communal calcareous skeletons, some of which are so large that they can be seen from space, as in the case of Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Over 500 million people depend on coral reefs for their incomes from tourism and fishing – and for their protection from storms. It is estimated that reef-based activities contribute annually over £200 billion to the global economy.

The 2014 reports of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change describe coral reefs as the most vulnerable marine ecosystem on Earth, stressing that they have very limited capacity to adapt to rising water temperatures and acidification. As such, they are key indicators of climate change, which the Commonwealth is particularly well placed to study. A considerable majority of Commonwealth countries have coral reefs in their territorial waters. They include all those small island members that face inundation as a result of rising sea levels.

Of course, the study and preservation of such reefs, while exceedingly important, must be seen within the context of the whole complex subject of the human impact on climate change.

The facts are increasingly clear. If current trends continue, most reports suggest that a period of rapid temperature increase will result in catastrophic effects during this century.

If planetary temperatures rise by 4 centigrade degrees or more, all the available evidence suggests that the provision of food and water for the majority of the world's population will become increasingly difficult. That would be a particularly acute problem in populous tropical countries, where the vast majority of the people of the Commonwealth live.

If food and water wars eventuate and become global and possibly nuclear, the results could threaten the very existence of civilisation.

Notwithstanding these dire warnings, it is evident that climate change and other stresses at earlier times in the Earth's history have accelerated the processes of evolution through natural selection – both for species and, when people appeared, for the products of human inventiveness. Who knows what the results will be during the next hundred years? With the Commonwealth playing a key role, they could be very exciting indeed.

ABOVE: A Zebra Lionfish and a Hawksbill turtle

LEFT: Anthias on a coral reef

Photographed by Terry Dormer

Abridged from the original article published in February 2015 in *The Round Table*, with the kind permission of its publishers, Taylor & Francis.

MORE ABOUT TERRY DORMER

A gallery of Terry Dormer's photographs is available at the picture library of the Natural History Museum: www.piclib.nhm.ac.uk/Terry_Dormer.asp

ROUND-UP OF THE REGIONS COMMONWEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS

Across the regions, RCS branches and associated youth groups launched the 2015 theme, 'A Young Commonwealth' at Commonwealth week events.

From Barbados to Bristol flags were raised and processions, dances, speeches, prayers and readings were given in celebration of the unique bond of nations that the Commonwealth represents. High Commissioners, British Embassies, politicians, youth groups and schools came together to hear HM The Queen's Commonwealth Day message read, to raise a toast and to mark the day in their own unique way.



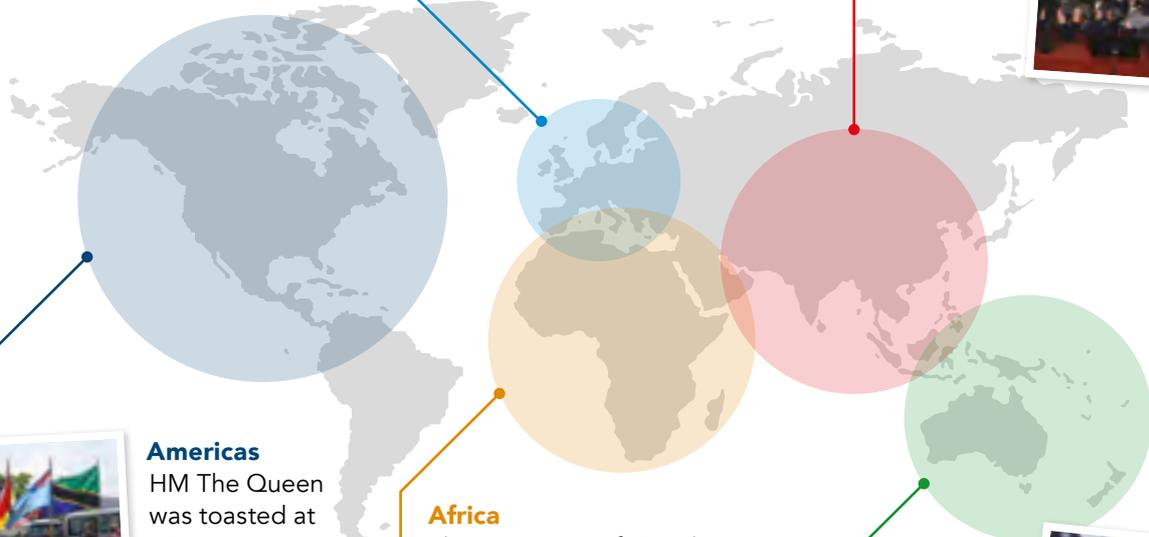
Europe

Flags were raised in Bristol and Guernsey, while in the Cayman Islands, a British

Overseas Territory, a church service, a flag parade, a youth parliament and a student steel band were all part of the celebrations. RCS Bath branch and local students took part in the reading of the Commonwealth Affirmations at Bath Abbey.

Asia

Of the many branches celebrating, Hong Kong entertained among others, ten Commonwealth Consuls-General; New Delhi gave particular focus to promoting The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition and in Malaysia, toasts were proposed to the accompaniment of school music groups. RCS Sri Lanka branch joined the celebrations in London.



Americas

HM The Queen was toasted at RCS Jamaica branch, The Dominican

Republic held a celebration in Santa Domingo, RCS Barbados branch organised a celebration involving a school choir, a National Youth Parliament representative and a Youth Ambassador addressing an audience of nearly 500. In Vancouver guests were piped into lunch and Winnipeg and others of the eleven Canadian branches held receptions.



Africa

The University of Douala, Camaroon, staged a four day conference of academic discussion and student activity, while in Abuja, RCS Nigeria hosted a celebration which included entertainment by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Cultural Group. Ghana's Parliament organised a public



universities debate on the topic: 'That Membership of the Commonwealth Be Opened to All Countries'.

Pacific

South Australia branch in Adelaide (among others) chose to co-celebrate with International Women's Day on Sunday 8th March; the addresses were given by three women. Wellington Branch, New Zealand included three national youth leader speakers, exemplifying the 2015 theme, 'A Young Commonwealth'.



ASSOCIATE FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY



The Council of the Royal Commonwealth Society has elected to re-introduce a fellowship scheme. The Society, under Royal Charter provision, has the right to award fellowships but they have been out of use for some time. It is intended that a revitalised scheme will have contemporary value and resonance.

Associate Fellowship is granted to those who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to promoting the values of the Commonwealth and working to improve the lives of Commonwealth citizens.

Associate Fellows to date, represent 49 of the 53 Commonwealth nations. The first cohort, aged between 18 and 29, were entrants for the 2015 Queen's Young Leaders Award programme. The judges were highly impressed by the dynamic and inspiring work these young people had been undertaking in their communities and in recognition, they were granted the distinction of Associate Fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

Through being part of the fellowship network, these remarkable young people will be able to share their skills, knowledge and experiences, becoming a unique resource for each other and for promoting the value and values of the Commonwealth.



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
Malta Branch

BRANCH FOCUS: MALTA

The Committee Members very much look forward to having an active branch and discussions are underway to hold lectures and other events to promote the Royal Commonwealth Society, Malta and the Commonwealth at large.

It is an exciting year in Malta – the RCS Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Forum in May, followed by

the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in November will both be held in Malta. Musical and cultural events are being planned by the branch to promote the diversity of the peoples of the Commonwealth.

On behalf of the Committee of the Malta Branch, I should like to extend our friendship to the other branches of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

We would be happy to assist any of their members with plans to visit Malta this year, or in the future as Malta takes on the EU Presidency in 2017 and the award of European Capital of Culture, 2018.

Geraldine Noel
Secretary

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COMING UP IN THE COMMONWEALTH

APRIL 28-30

Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, Caribbean Region



THE QUEEN'S
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2015

MAY 1

Entry Deadline for 2015 Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition (Royal Commonwealth Society)

MAY 13-17

The Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Forum (Royal Commonwealth Society)

MAY 17

Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting (CHMM), Geneva – theme of 'Universal Health Coverage'

JUNE 15

800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta

JUNE 16-19

Commonwealth Local Government Conference, Botswana (Commonwealth Local Government Forum)

JUNE 22

Opening of nominations for Queen's Young Leaders Programme, 2016 (Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, Royal Commonwealth Society and Comic Relief)

JUNE 22-26

Queen's Young Leaders Residential Programme, London and Cambridge

JUNE 22-26

19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19CCEM), The Bahamas, including associated forums for Stakeholders, Teachers and Youth

SEPTEMBER 5-11

5th Commonwealth Youth Games, Samoa (Commonwealth Games Federation)

OCTOBER (TBC – 9-11)

Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, Peru (World Bank/IMF meeting)

OCTOBER (TBC)

7th Commonwealth Youth Parliament – Northern Territory, Australia



NOVEMBER 27-29

CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting), Malta, including Commonwealth: People's Forum (CPF), Youth Forum (CYF), Business Forum (CBF) and the newly created Women's Forum.

KEEP IN THE CONVERSATION

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The Association of Commonwealth Universities

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is the world's first and oldest international university network, established in 1913.



A UK-registered charity, the ACU has over 500 member institutions in developed and developing countries across the Commonwealth. Drawing on the collective experience and expertise of our membership, the ACU seeks to address issues in international higher education through a range of projects and services.

The ACU administers scholarships – including the three main international scholarship schemes of the UK government, provides academic research and leadership on issues in the sector, and promotes inter-university cooperation and the sharing of good practice – helping universities serve their communities, now and into the future.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The role of universities in strengthening development

12-14 May 2015
Johannesburg, South Africa

Held in partnership with the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association and the National Research Foundation.

www.acusarima.com

www.acu.ac.uk @The_ACU

20

CELEBRATING CLGF'S
20TH ANNIVERSARY

2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). CLGF has been at the forefront of policy debate on local government over the past 20 years, resulting in key instruments such as the *Aberdeen Agenda: principles on local democracy and good governance* and the *Cardiff Consensus on local economic development* which are helping shape and benchmark local government policy across the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2015
LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2030: ACHIEVING THE VISION

Gaborone, Botswana
16-19 June 2015

The Commonwealth Local Government Conference (CLGC) is CLGF's flagship event bringing together top policy makers in local government from across the world. The conference is held every two years across the Commonwealth. 2015 will be the first time that the conference has been held in Botswana. It is organised by CLGF in conjunction with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Botswana Association of Local Authorities.

Conference theme and outcomes



2015 is a significant year for local government internationally. Not only does it mark CLGF's 20th anniversary but it will also see the dawn of the new sustainable development goals at the UN General Assembly and a meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Malta. The theme of CLGC 2015 is Local government 2030: achieving the vision. It will look at how local government is being tasked to make the SDGs happen by 2030 as part of their being delivered 'at all levels', and draw up a roadmap for local government to take this forward including supporting democratic norms and good local governance, driving local economic growth and sustainable development, and developing inclusive, safe and sustainable cities and human settlements.



For further information visit www.clgf.org.uk or www.clgc2015.org alternatively contact us at clgc2015@clgf.org.uk or follow us on @clgf_news.

COMMONWEALTH DAY OBSERVANCE

WESTMINSTER ABBEY
Monday 9 March 2015

Highlights of this year's celebration of the Commonwealth's unity and diversity.



 @TheRCSLondon  facebook.com/thercs  youtube.com/user/TheRCSociety



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