



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS



Press Release

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Young people from Asia and the Pacific meet the Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka as part of the Commonwealth Gender Champions – Gender Matters! programme.

On Monday July 16th, thirty young people aged 18-25 from Commonwealth nations in South Asia and the South Pacific attended a reception hosted by the Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr Bryce Hutcheson. This marked the start of a 6-day international workshop and cultural programme designed to support the participants to champion gender equality within their communities.

The 'Commonwealth Gender Champions – Gender Matters!' programme is an initiative of The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) in London and the Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network (CYGEN). It takes place from Monday 16th to Saturday 21st July and has been generously supported by the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs (DFAT). The Ministry of Tourism is also organising a cultural and educational visit to show the rich history and culture of Sri Lanka.

In 2015 CYGEN was established by the RCS in Malta with the aim of building a network of young gender equality advocates from across the Commonwealth who can collaborate and share good practice in their work. Achieving greater gender equality is a high priority for the Commonwealth of Nations, which sees young people as crucial participants in development and achieving positive social change.

The Commonwealth Gender Champions - Gender Matters programme builds upon the work of CYGEN by convening young gender advocates from across Asia and the Pacific to strengthen the role of young people in Commonwealth decision making and action on gender equality issues. Using active learning, discussion and debate, it will provide an opportunity to develop leadership and advocacy skills.

Upon returning to their home communities, participants will be encouraged to undertake a social action project, using their newly acquired skills and expertise. These young advocates will continue to build upon the Asia-Pacific regional networks and relationships established during the week.

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Notes for Editors

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) @TheRCSLondon

- The Royal Commonwealth Society is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world.
- Founded in 1868, it is non-partisan, independent of governments, and is supported by public generosity.
- This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Society's founding.
- The Society engages with youth, civil society, business, and governmental networks to address issues that matter to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network (CYGEN) @CYGENetwork

CYGEN was established by the RCS in Malta in May 2015 with the support of the Australian Government. The aim of CYGEN is to build a network of young people from across the Commonwealth who can collaborate and share good practice in their work. CYGEN ensures that the youth voice on gender equality issues is heard in community, national and international discussions. Since its launch, CYGEN has been represented at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings in Malta (2015) and the United Kingdom (2018) as well as at the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting.



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