



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY  
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

## **PRESS RELEASE – THE DUCHESS OF CORNWALL BECOMES VICE-PATRON OF THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY ON ITS 150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

On the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Royal Commonwealth Society, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and UN, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, hosted a reception at Lancaster House at which Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall was announced as the Society's inaugural Vice-Patron.

The reception brought together representatives from Her Majesty's Government, the Commonwealth diplomatic corps, Accredited Commonwealth Organisations and representatives from the Society's international network of over 60 branches to highlight the ongoing work of the Society across a broad range of issues.

This includes work in the fields of trade, gender equality, LGBT rights, environmental conservation through The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy, and youth literacy. The Society also delivers annual pre-eminent Commonwealth events such as the multi-faith Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey, which is attended by Her Majesty The Queen and Members of the Royal Family, and the High Commissioners' Banquet.

This appointment builds on the relationship that The Duchess of Cornwall has had with the Society through her patronage of The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition since 2014. The Competition is the world's oldest international schools' writing competition, founded in 1883 to promote literacy, self-expression and creativity amongst young people throughout the Commonwealth.

Greg Munro, Chief Executive of The Royal Commonwealth Society, said, 'Today's reception is a celebration of all that The Royal Commonwealth Society has achieved over the past 150 years. But more than that, it's about looking to the future. Throughout its long history, the Society has always been at the forefront of pushing for progressive change in the Commonwealth, and has itself changed a great deal during that time. From its origins as an academic and literary society, the Society has transformed to become a charitable organisation whose work impacts the lives of thousands of people worldwide. Today, we reaffirm our mission to effect change by connecting, convening and equipping people and communities to advance the values of the Commonwealth. To fulfil that mission, we will continue to adapt to a changing world.'

Lord Howell, President of The Royal Commonwealth Society, said, 'The Royal Commonwealth Society may be 150 years old but we are also 150 years new - building on the past but heading into the future. The modern Commonwealth has become a huge oasis



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of democratic values and law in an increasingly dangerous and lawless world. We are proud not merely to be part of it, but to be making an impact on and meeting the needs of this ever more closely connected assembly of nations and peoples in their billions, young and old. This we will continue to do with all the strength we can muster.'

Her Majesty The Queen has been Patron of the Society since 1952.

- ENDS -

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Photographs of the event are available for use from the Press Association.

**The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS)** is a global network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens. Founded in 1868 and constituted by Royal Charter, the Society is the oldest and largest non-governmental, non-partisan civil society organisation devoted to the modern Commonwealth. The Society seeks to highlight and address those issues which inhibit prosperity, endanger the rights of citizens and limit opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. The Society's unique and respected position within the Commonwealth family allows it to play a pivotal role in convening and connecting the Commonwealth's myriad of stakeholders on a wide range of issues. [www.thercs.org](http://www.thercs.org) @TheRCSLondon

## MEDIA CONTACTS

### **The Royal Commonwealth Society**

Mark Normington, Media and Communications Officer

[mark.normington@thercs.org](mailto:mark.normington@thercs.org) 020 3727 4318

### **Clarence House**

Ella Lynch, Clarence House Communications Office

[ella.lynch@royal.uk](mailto:ella.lynch@royal.uk) 020 7024 4353, 07392 087141