



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

PRESS RELEASE: 10th Commonwealth Youth Forum Adding Global Value ...#WhatNext?

Commonwealth youth have called for a greater role for young people as peace builders. The emotional plea was made today at the 10th Commonwealth Youth Forum in Malta, a side event to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The delegates expressed deep concern that some young people are being manipulated and are falling into violent extremism.

The Youth Forum also called for action on youth unemployment, greater support for youth entrepreneurship and access to Information Computer Technology (ICT). Commonwealth youth are also increasingly concerned about the impact of climate change on their countries and futures, and the social and economic consequences of sustainable economic development. The forum called for young people to be put at the centre of promoting renewable energy.

The Royal Commonwealth Society's gender equality network, The Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network (CYGEN) called for more partnerships with stakeholders to ensure a stronger and more collaborative Commonwealth network to highlight gender issues.

CYGEN Co-ordinator, Sarah Soysa said Commonwealth youth must be allowed to have a voice: "Young people must be supported, recognised and provided with safe spaces for advocacy and activism so that they can meaningfully engage in rights, development and justice," she said.

One young delegate from Nigeria also passionately reminded delegates of the Chibok 'Bring Back Our Girls' campaign and the need to address the violence against women in some Commonwealth countries.

Aristarick Joseph, youth activist for Youth for Change in Tanzania highlighted the plight of around 12,000 young girls who are forced into early marriage in his country each year. He called for a change to the legal framework which allows early marriage and practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Notes to editors:

The Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network (CYGEN) is a youth-led advocacy group that works towards policy change that improves the lives of young people and promotes gender equality. First convened by the Royal Commonwealth Society it is now the premier group of young experts on gender equality issues in the Commonwealth.

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, the Society is constituted by Royal Charter (amended 2013) and is a charity in England and Wales (226748). The Society engages with its youth, civil society, business and governmental networks to

address issues that matter to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Its primary focus is the promotion of young people throughout the Commonwealth. www.thercs.org

BROADCASTERS, AGENCIES AND ONLINE VIDEO SITES - A free-to-use Video News Release is available for download below:

Video format: Quicktime H.264 1080i HD.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B99sotFuWzoWNnNaS0ZiVDhyemc/view?usp=sharing>

Contents:

-GVs of youth delegates taking selfies, meeting each other, general forum overlay

Interviews/Grabs:

-Sarah Soysa, Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network (CYGEN) Co-ordinator

-Aristarick Joseph, Youth activist, "Youth for Change" Tanzania

-Leon Ward, UK Young Ambassador to the Commonwealth and CYGEN Member

TOMORROW: A free to use VNR focusing on the CHOGM Women's Forum. Includes interview with Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott-Despoja.

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