



**Press Statement: 29 April 2015**

**Royal Commonwealth Society expresses its sympathy for the victims of the earthquake in Nepal.**

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) expresses its sadness for the victims and families now dealing with the appalling conditions in Nepal following its worst earthquake in over 80 years.

The RCS is pleased that the 'Commonwealth Family' is coming together to send rescue teams and aid - India has sent 13 military transport planes and a 40-person disaster response team, and the British contribution has reached a massive £15 million. Canada has pledged \$5 million and Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Rob Nicholson announced on Monday that the government would match — dollar-for-dollar — all eligible contributions to the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund between April 25 and May 25. Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop announced on Monday the government pledge of over \$5 million in life-saving humanitarian assistance to Nepal in the areas of shelter, health, water and sanitation, plus \$50,000 for maternal and child health support plus a Defence Force aircraft to deliver humanitarian supplies and additional medical personnel.

Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Michael Lake, CBE, says in times of such tragic world events such as this, the Commonwealth should play an important role in providing support and assistance, and the Commonwealth is more than playing its part:

'Nepal has suffered such a catastrophic event, that we are happy that the Commonwealth family of 53 nations has responded so dramatically to help. Nepal is one of Britain's oldest allies in Asia and the UK still has an extremely strong bond with the Gurkha's who fought so staunchly alongside Commonwealth troops. The Commonwealth covers a third of the world's population, and it has recently pulled together to assist in Vanuatu, and now with this terrible tragedy in Nepal.' he said.

Mr Lake called for Commonwealth donors to offer assistance through established Aid Agencies on the ground rather than food or clothing, as the infrastructure in the country is struggling to cope with physical donations.

#### Notes to Editors

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 as a charity.



## THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

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.

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Press Statement: 18 March 2015