



DEBATE PACK

CDP 0027 (2021) | 11 March 2021

Commonwealth Day 2021

Westminster Hall

Tuesday 16 March 2021

9:25-11:00am

Debate led by Ian Liddell-Grainger

By Philip Loft
and Nigel Walker

Contents

1.	Background	2
2.	Affirmations	5
3.	Press articles	8
4.	Press releases	9
5.	PQs	11
6.	Debates	21
7.	Statements	22
8.	Annex: Map of Member States	29

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://parliamentlive.tv).

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

The establishment and shape of the Commonwealth

The modern Commonwealth was established in April 1949 with the signing of the [London Declaration](#).

There are now 54 countries in the Commonwealth, with a combined population of 2.4 billion.

More than 60 per cent of that population is aged 29 or under. The combined GDP of Commonwealth countries was estimated at \$10.4 trillion in 2017 and was predicted to reach \$13 trillion in 2020. Half of the top 20 global emerging cities are in Commonwealth countries (source: The Commonwealth, [Fast facts on the Commonwealth](#)).

Many small and developing Commonwealth countries are also among those with the lowest ecological footprint worldwide. 32 Commonwealth countries are classed as [“small states”](#).

Commonwealth Day 2021

[Commonwealth Day](#), which is an annual celebration of the Commonwealth of Nations, is held on the second Monday in March every year.

This year it fell on 8 March 2021 and the theme was [“Delivering a Common Future”](#).

HM The Queen delivered a [televised message on 7 March 2021](#) to mark the day.

Heads of Government Meeting, June 2021

Every two years, the leaders of the Commonwealth countries come together to discuss issues affecting the Commonwealth and to shape Commonwealth policies and priorities. All member states have an equal say, regardless of their size or wealth, which ensures that even the smallest countries have a voice.

The next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2021) is due to take place in Rwanda in June. It was [originally planned](#) for June 2020, but was [delayed due to the pandemic](#). [Rwanda](#) and Mozambique are the only two Commonwealth countries without historic ties to the UK.

Themes from 2018 meeting

The theme for [CHOGM 2021](#) is the same for Commonwealth Day: “Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming”.

At CHOGM 2021 leaders will discuss how to deliver the recommendations of CHOGM 2018, which was on the theme “Towards a Common Future”. [Commitments in 2018](#) included the opportunity for at least 12 years of quality education and learning by 2030, upholding

fundamental political values, preventing gender-based violence and supporting free trade.

The UK is the current Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth. The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office published the [UK Commonwealth Chair-in-Office Report 2018-2020](#) (September 2020), with information on the delivery of the [CHOGM 2018 Leaders commitments](#).

Before CHOGM 2020 was cancelled, the [UK Government said](#) in March 2020 that it would seek to “develop relationships with each of the Commonwealth countries in line with [...] global Britain”; to encourage Commonwealth and other countries to modernise laws regarding rights for sexuality, and support the voices of smaller states.

More information on “Global Britain” can be found in the [associated Library reading list](#).

CHOGM 2021 is expected to consider renewing the [term of the current Secretary General of the Commonwealth](#), Baroness Scotland of Asthal.

Brexit and the Commonwealth

The [Commonwealth Secretariat states](#) that post-Brexit “there is an opportunity for trade growth between Commonwealth countries”.

It published [Brexit and Commonwealth Trade](#) in 2017, which discussed the importance of trade between Commonwealth members and future opportunities, and potential concerns for developing countries post-Brexit, including in maintaining market access.

The Commons International Trade Committee published a report on [Trade and the Commonwealth](#) in 2018 (HC 667). A [Government response](#) was published in May 2019.

The Commons Library briefing, [Statistics on UK trade with the Commonwealth](#) (December 2020) provides trade trends between 1999 and 2019.

The Department for International Trade [states](#) it will work with Commonwealth Members to “strengthen their engagement with the multilateral trading system” and is [committed](#) to work with the Commonwealth to “remove barriers and liberalise the global trading environment”.

The Commonwealth and the Coronavirus pandemic

In July 2020, Commonwealth Leaders from all 54 member states issued a [joint statement](#) on the pandemic and member states’ actions to fight it. This included a commitment to ensure “equitable access to quality health services and safe, effective and affordable medicines and vaccines for all”.

The Commonwealth Innovation Fund has published [analysis on the impact of the pandemic on the Commonwealth](#). This includes a [projection](#) that numbers in extreme poverty will rise from 209.9 million (2019) to 237.1 million (2021).

There have been [fears that developing countries may miss out on access to vaccines](#) in 2021. The Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Baroness Scotland, [told the United Nations Human Rights Council](#) in February that vaccines “remain out the grasp of far too many [and] means citizens of the poorest nations may bear the brunt of hundreds of thousands of needless deaths”.

In response to a [Parliamentary Question](#) in February 2021 on the steps the UK Government is taking to support Coronavirus vaccination programmes, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Minister, Nigel Adams, said:

The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, treatments and tests globally. The UK has committed £548m for the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment to support access to COVID-19 vaccines for up to 92 developing countries, a number of which are in the Commonwealth, by contributing to the supply of 1.3 billion doses in 2021, and vaccinations for up to 500 million people.

2. Affirmations



Commonwealth Day 2021 Affirmation

Let us now stand to pledge ourselves afresh to uphold and serve the values and fellowship of the Commonwealth.

The Affirmation

We affirm that every person possesses unique worth and dignity.

We affirm our respect for nature, and that we will be stewards of the earth by caring for every part of it, and for it as a whole.

We affirm our belief in justice for everyone, and peace among peoples and nations.

Joining together in kinship and affinity, in diversity and unity, as members of a worldwide family of nations, we build on shared inheritances.

We cooperate with mutual respect and goodwill to deliver a common future for the good of all.

Through Commonwealth connection we learn from one another, and innovate to transform our communities, our nations and our world.

Response

We affirm our belief in the Commonwealth as a powerful influence for good in the world, and pledge ourselves to its service, now and for the future.



[Affirmation by Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth on its 70th anniversary](#)

London, 10 July 2019

Seventy years ago, the Heads of Government of Commonwealth nations made a bold and far-sighted commitment to an innovative vision for what could be achieved through international connection and collaboration building on the values of continuing development, democracy and the rule of law. They declared that, as free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, the countries they represented would remain partners, freely co-operating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress.

The Commonwealth of Nations then comprised eight members; it now encompasses fifty-three countries: over a quarter of the membership of the United Nations, and nearly a third of the population of the world. Through seven decades of economic growth and social and political development, many more nations are realising their potential. The Commonwealth has a proud history of acting to strengthen good governance and the rule of law, to protect and promote democratic principles and human rights, to promote peace and security and to strengthen democratic institutions. As they have done so, deeper understanding of our interdependence has also grown, and of the value of mutual support and encouragement towards upholding, and making progress based upon, the shared values and principles which are now brought together in the Commonwealth Charter.

The wide geographical spread and rich diversity of culture and endowment represented by our member countries, and by the people who live in them, combine to make the Commonwealth of Nations particularly well positioned to lead by example in seizing the opportunities of the 21st century, and to tackle the increasingly urgent challenges which confront us now or lie ahead. Commonwealth collaboration shines as a beacon for multilateralism.

Our member nations can collectively provide leadership within the wider global community towards bright new horizons of hope in a world that is fairer, more prosperous, more sustainable and more secure. We do so by offering new thinking, by devising innovative approaches and by making contributions to sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, inclusive economic growth, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the health, happiness and harmony of our people, and the protection of democracy, particularly by building peace and security through the reinforcement of the rules-based international order, and respect and understanding that transcends boundaries of cultural, religious or any other identity. We are particularly mindful of the role of the Commonwealth as an advocate for the needs of smaller and more vulnerable states, and for the inclusion of people and communities that are marginalised.

Through her personal example, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Head of the Commonwealth, has offered gentle encouragement and been an inspiration to generations of Commonwealth citizens. Her Majesty has shown unwavering faithfulness to the high ideals which enable the Commonwealth to flourish. This will be carried forward when, in the fullness of time and as agreed by our Heads of Government, HRH Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, becomes Head of the Commonwealth.

We - representatives of the Governments of Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, eSwatini, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malaysia, Malta, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, St Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, The Gambia, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu and Zambia, together with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, reaffirm our dedication to the core values and principles of the Commonwealth as declared in our Charter.

We commit with renewed confidence and determination to work towards deepening the impact that the connected Commonwealth brings to our world. In doing so, we affirm our core principles of consensus and common action, mutual respect, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and responsiveness. Working together with common purpose, our determination is to build a better and brighter world for the good of all our people.

3. Press articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[Commonwealth Secretary-General inspects Kigali's readiness to host upcoming CHOGM summit](#)

CGTN Africa
Jerry Omondi
11 March 2021

[The Commonwealth: Why does it exist and does it help its members?](#)

The Africa Report
10 March 2021

[Is the Commonwealth declining?](#)

The Daily Star (Bangladesh)
Selina Mohsin
9 March 2021

[The Queen Emphasizes Unity in Commonwealth Day Speech](#)

Vanity Fair
Kate Nicholl
7 March 2021

4. Press releases

[UK delivers £500m of projects for Commonwealth citizens](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

9 September 2020

The UK's Chair-in-Office report, released today, highlights the achievements of the organisation since the UK became Chair at the 2018 CHOGM.

From providing antibiotics to more than nine million people to prevent blinding trachoma, to building a Clean Ocean Alliance of 34 countries, more than 40 projects have been delivered during the United Kingdom's leadership of the Commonwealth, a new report shows.

The [UK's Chair-in-Office report](#) details the projects and achievements of the organisation since the UK became Chair at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London in 2018.

The report demonstrates how the UK has worked with the organisation's 53 fellow member states to support and deliver £500m worth of projects across six continents for the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary Dominic Raab said:

I am proud that as Chair-in-Office, the UK has been at the forefront of the Commonwealth's efforts to deliver for all members.

Together we have been united in our response to COVID-19, whilst also improving cyber security, encouraging trade and tackling climate change.

Projects delivered during the UK's term include:

- The creation of a new women's mediators network, which has trained 46 mediators from 21 countries;
- Supporting the repealing and reforming of outdated legislation that discriminates against women, girls and LGBT communities in six Commonwealth countries. (Unfortunately we can't name them because of sensitivities).
- Connecting 3,000 female entrepreneurs to global markets through SheTrades Commonwealth;
- Providing antibiotics to more than nine million people to prevent blinding trachoma in countries such as Nigeria, Tanzania, and Vanuatu;
- Building the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance, in which 34 countries across six continents have united to tackle marine pollution;
- Strengthening cyber security in every Commonwealth nation through the sharing of expertise and threat intelligence;
- Championing 12 years of quality education for girls across 11 member states, including Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique,

Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia;

The UK will hand over the Chair-in-Office role to Rwanda at the next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM), due to be held in 2021.

The summit, which was previously scheduled to be held in Kigali in June 2020, was postponed earlier this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. PQs

[Commonwealth: Coronavirus](#)

09 Feb 2021 | 147756

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support covid-19 vaccination programmes in Commonwealth countries.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, treatments and tests globally. The UK has committed £548m for the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment to support access to COVID-19 vaccines for up to 92 developing countries, a number of which are in the Commonwealth, by contributing to the supply of 1.3 billion doses in 2021, and vaccinations for up to 500 million people.

[Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games](#)

04 Feb 2021 | 911815

Asked by: Theo Clarke

What progress his Department has made in preparing for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth games.

Answered by: Nigel Huddleston | Department for Culture, Media and Sport

We remain on track to deliver a fantastic games on time and on budget. It will bring lasting benefits for Birmingham, the west midlands and the whole country. The west midlands region will benefit from a £778 million investment to stage the 2022 Commonwealth games in Birmingham, including £594 million of funding from central Government. Along with our partners, we continue to work hard to deliver the games in what are obviously very challenging circumstances.

[Rwanda: Human Rights](#)

11 Jan 2021 | 132957

Asked by: Naz Shah

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he made an assessment of the human rights record of the government of Rwanda before agreeing to attend the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting with Rwanda.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Commonwealth places a high priority on being a community of peaceful, democratic countries which promote and protect shared values, including the rule of law and human rights. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) - of which the UK is a current member, is the custodian of these fundamental values.

Rwanda has made huge strides over the past two decades. It has a strong track record of equality of women in Rwanda's cabinet and parliament, and there have been significant improvements in healthcare, reconciliation, development and prosperity. However, the UK remains concerned by Rwanda's overall human rights record and regularly raises specific cases of concern with the Rwandan Government. We continue to encourage Rwanda to model Commonwealth values of respect for human rights and rule of law as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter, and to match its impressive development progress with gains in civil and political rights.

Rwanda was selected at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018 (CHOGM18) as the host of the 26th CHOGM. The summit, re-scheduled to take place in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2021 presents a valuable opportunity for Heads to meet and for the Commonwealth family to demonstrate how, by upholding and promoting the principles of the Commonwealth, a bright common future can be built for all. The UK plans to attend in our capacity as Chair-in-Office.

Commonwealth: Overseas Aid

10 Dec 2020 | HL10859

Asked by: Lord Field of Birkenhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the overseas aid budget is allocated to Commonwealth countries; and how much each of those countries receives.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In 2019, UK bilateral aid to Commonwealth countries totalled over £1.887 billion, representing around 18% of total UK bilateral ODA. Information on UK bilateral aid to each Commonwealth country is contained in table A4g of the 2019 UK Statistics on International Development, published on Gov.uk.

Commonwealth Secretariat: Recruitment

01 Dec 2020 | 120035

Asked by: Matthew Offord

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the staff recruitment policy of the Commonwealth Secretariat ensures that members of all 54 Commonwealth countries have an equal opportunity to be considered when vacancies occur.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The staff recruitment policy of the Commonwealth Secretariat is a matter for the Secretariat. But we understand that any job advertised by the Secretariat is open to applications from the nationals of all Commonwealth countries.

Trade: Commonwealth**27 Oct 2020 | HL9098****Asked by: Viscount Waverley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many civil servants are working on initiatives aimed at increasing intra-Commonwealth trade.

Answering member: Lord Grimstone of Boscobel | Department for International Trade

The Department for International Trade (DIT)'s Trade Policy Group (TPG) has a strong core of trade policy officials, with a headcount as of end September 2020 of 676 civil servants. Within TPG there are dedicated teams in charge of bilateral trade relations with Commonwealth members, including Australia, New Zealand, and India, as well as multilateral and regional teams, such as the World Trade Organisation and Africa teams.

In addition, DIT's overseas network of posts (Global Trade and Investment Overseas) is responsible for supporting UK exports and investment across the world. It is formed of nine regions, each reporting to a trade commissioner, known as Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner (HMTTC), seven of whom cover Commonwealth countries as part of their trade responsibilities. As of September 2020, there are 151 UK-based civil servants – supported by 1,320 locally engaged staff – working in all HMTTC regions.

Workstreams aimed at increasing intra-Commonwealth trade are progressed by teams of varying sizes, depending on their complexity, and DIT officials also work in close co-operation with civil servants across government, including the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), as well as in diplomatic and consular posts across the Commonwealth.

The workforce data only includes civil servants employed by DIT working in the UK and on DIT payroll, and UK based civil servants and locally employed staff working overseas paid via FCDO payroll who are currently engaged in delivering DIT objectives. It does not include staff on loan to DIT from other government departments who remain on their home departments payroll, contractors, military staff, people on secondment from other organisations, those who are on loan or secondment out of DIT, those on unpaid special leave or a career break, and people working in UK Export Finance (UKEF).

Overseas Trade: Commonwealth**19 Oct 2020 | HL8842****Asked by: Viscount Waverley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their strategy for future trade relations with the Commonwealth.

Answering member: Lord Grimstone of Boscobel | Department for International Trade

The Commonwealth includes some of our closest friends and greatest allies. We share strong bonds and I hope the Noble Lord will welcome our commitment to work closely with Commonwealth countries to remove barriers and liberalise the global trading environment.

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2018, chaired by the United Kingdom, we committed to boosting intra-Commonwealth trade beyond \$2 trillion (approximately £1.5 trillion) by 2030. Commonwealth leaders also adopted the 'Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment' to enhance co-operation amongst ourselves.

In October 2019, my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade chaired the sixth Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting, which reaffirmed the Commonwealth's support for free trade and the rules based multilateral trading system.

HM Government is also funding several projects including the Commonwealth Trade Facilitation Programme, the Commonwealth Standards Network and the SheTrades Commonwealth Programme, and continues to support increasing trade and investment between Commonwealth partner countries, taking advantage of the average cost of trade between us being 19% lower than the cost of trade outside the Commonwealth.

LGBT International Rights

12 Oct 2020 | 806 c865

Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury

My Lords, Theresa May's apology at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London in 2018 marked a turning point, placing the responsibility for laws that outlaw homosexuality at our door. I welcome the fact that the Government are topping up the fund, but how much progress has been made on decriminalisation in Commonwealth countries and are other countries contributing to the fund to ensure that we make more rapid progress?

Answered by: Baroness Sugg | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

My Lords, we have seen good progress over the past two years. Our UK-funded Equality & Justice Alliance has helped to promote the full social, economic and political participation of all, has helped to support the creation and strengthening of movements for change and has delivered a series of dialogues across the Commonwealth. We hope to see further progress in Commonwealth countries.

Commonwealth: Overseas Aid**06 Oct 2020 | 97032****Asked by: Anthony Mangnall**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the UK's Official Development Assistance spending went to Commonwealth nations in each year since 2010.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Information on annual UK bilateral aid to Commonwealth nations over the period 2009 to 2019 is contained in table A4g of the 2019 UK Statistics on International Development, published on [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

China: Commonwealth**06 Oct 2020 | 97031****Asked by: Anthony Mangnall**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent of Chinese interference in the internal affairs of Commonwealth nations.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

China plays an important role as a development partner for some Commonwealth nations. However, we are also clear-eyed about the risks this poses in terms of China's economic and political influence. It has always been the case that where we have concerns we raise them. We continue to work with Commonwealth member states in close partnerships bilaterally, within the Commonwealth, and in other international fora across a wide range of issues. This work includes protecting and promoting the rule of law, democracy and human rights, addressing global challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, and advocating for small and vulnerable states.

Commonwealth**28 Sep 2020 | HL8260****Asked by: Viscount Waverley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for conducting a reconciliation process for Commonwealth countries about their historic treatment by the UK; and what plans they have, if any, to undertake such a process.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We have no plans to undertake such a process. Our strong relationships with our 53 fellow and equal Commonwealth members are grounded in mutual respect and common values, and in recognition of our shared history. We continue to work together in close partnerships bilaterally, within the Commonwealth, and in other international fora across a wide range of issues, including rule of law, human rights and shared

global challenges. Commonwealth collaboration helps all its members build a better future.

[Commonwealth](#)

06 Aug 2020 | HL7225

Asked by: Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss the case for creating new permanent Commonwealth specialist agencies at the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Answering member: Baroness Sugg | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK has no plans to discuss the creation of new specialist agencies at the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). We are focused on strengthening and delivering through the existing institutions, organisations and networks of the Commonwealth. Those include the three inter-governmental organisations (the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning) and their many programmes; several intergovernmental fora of ministers and senior officials; and over 80 Commonwealth-accredited organisations. We look forward to the postponed CHOGM being held in Kigali next year. The UK will continue as Commonwealth Chair-in-Office until then.

[Zimbabwe: Commonwealth](#)

11 Jun 2020 | HL4975

Asked by: Lord Hain

Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the application by the government of Zimbabwe to re-join the Commonwealth is suspended until any violations of human rights cease and are addressed, including the reported arrest, abduction and torture of Joana Mamombe, Netsai Marova and Cecilia Chimbiri on 13 May.

Answering member: Baroness Sugg | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The decision regarding Zimbabwe's readmission would be for all Commonwealth members. However, the UK will only support readmission when Zimbabwe meets the admission requirements, complying with the values and principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter. These principles include respect for human rights and the rule of law. Disproportionate use of force by Zimbabwe's security forces, as seen in January 2019 and August 2019, and recent reports regarding the abduction and torture of three opposition activists, are clearly inconsistent with the Commonwealth Charter. The Minister for Africa made this clear when he spoke to the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 8 June.

Gender Based Violence

07 Jul 2020 | 62626

Asked by: Anthony Mangnall

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans the Government has to raise the matter of gender-based violence at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Rwanda.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Unfortunately, in light of Covid-19, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda 2020 has been postponed. The Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon looks forward to attending the next CHOGM when it takes place in Kigali. Gender equality remains as important as ever in these times given the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on women and girls. We are working hard to ensure that they are at the forefront of our response. The UK is proud to be a world leader on efforts to prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and we are committed to eliminating it in all its forms.

Rwanda

23 Jun 2020 | 804 cc107-111

Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the government of Rwanda and the Commonwealth Secretariat on (1) progress on implementing the action points since the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in London in April 2018, and (2) arrangements for exchanges with Commonwealth Heads of Government as a consequence of the postponement of the June 2020 meeting.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

My Lords, as Chair-in-Office for the Commonwealth, we have worked diligently with the Commonwealth family to deliver the heads' 2018 commitments and regularly update Members on this progress. We are also in close contact with the Government of Rwanda and the Commonwealth Secretariat on rescheduling CHOGM. Commonwealth member states have responded to Covid-19 collaboratively. Commonwealth Health Ministers met virtually on 14 May to discuss the pandemic, and on 28 May I briefed Commonwealth high commissioners on the UK's international response.

Commonwealth: Membership

24 Mar 2020 | 29846

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote the benefits of membership of the Commonwealth to potential new members.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

As Chair-in-Office, the UK is working with our partners to demonstrate the continuing relevance of the modern Commonwealth. This includes working with its three pillars - the Commonwealth Secretariat, the 53 other Member States, and its organisations and networks - to deliver on the ambitious commitments made during CHOGM 2018.

With the support of over £500m of UK programmes and projects, the Commonwealth has already made impressive progress on shared priorities, such as international trade, climate change and governance and rule of law. 31 Commonwealth countries are together now tackling marine plastic pollution, whilst over 3,000 women entrepreneurs across the Commonwealth have been supported to internationalise their businesses, and barriers to trade have been reduced.

Commonwealth: Foreign Relations

20 Mar 2020 | 30063

Asked by: Ranil Jayawardena

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to promote bilateral relations with the Commonwealth.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK marked Commonwealth Day on 9 March. In his statement, the Prime Minister outlined the enduring bond between the Commonwealth network of 54 countries, who are united in its promotion of peace, democracy and human rights. At Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018 (CHOGM18) in London, the UK announced £500m of projects and programmes to support delivery of the Commonwealth leaders commitments under the headings of security, prosperity, democracy and sustainability. After hosting CHOGM18, the UK took up the role of Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, a position held by the Commonwealth country which has hosted the most recent CHOGM.

The UK has been an active Chair-in-Office, committed to strengthening and renewing the Commonwealth, through its three pillars - the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Member States and Commonwealth organisations and networks. We have driven delivery of Commonwealth leaders commitments, supported the Commonwealth to have a stronger voice as an advocate for multilateral cooperation in the rules-based international system and increased solidarity between members. The UK has also championed reform of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Initiatives have been undertaken in a diverse range of policy areas, from climate change and marine protection, to cyber security, mediation of conflict and promotion of intra-Commonwealth trade. 31 Commonwealth countries are together now tackling marine plastic pollution, whilst over 3,000 women entrepreneurs across the Commonwealth have been supported to internationalise their businesses, and barriers to trade have been reduced.

History: Education

10 Mar 2020 | HL1940

Asked by: Lord Luce

To ask Her Majesty's Government what efforts they have made during their chairmanship of the Commonwealth Heads of Government to ensure that the history of the Commonwealth is taught in UK schools.

Answering member: Baroness Berridge | Department for Education

The history curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom and flexibility to use specific examples from history to teach pupils about the history of Britain and the wider world.

There are opportunities within the themes and eras of the history curriculum for teachers and schools to teach about the history of the Commonwealth at Key Stages 1-3. Schools can teach about the Commonwealth at Key Stage 1, when teaching about events beyond or within living memory that are significant nationally or globally, and at Key Stage 2, within a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066. There are also opportunities at Key Stage 3, within the 'ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745-1901' and 'challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day' themes. 'Indian independence and end of Empire' is one of the example topics in this latter theme. The Commonwealth also falls within the scope of the subject content set out for GCSE history.

The government shared a [Commonwealth Education Pack](#) for teachers in 2018, in support of the UK's hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that year.

Commonwealth: LGBT People

25 Feb 2020 | 1207

Asked by: Emily Thornberry

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to tackle the abuse of LGBT+ rights in Commonwealth countries.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We continue to raise the importance of countering discrimination within the Commonwealth, including on grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation. Working through the UN Human Rights Council, the

Council of Europe, the Commonwealth and other multilateral fora, we regularly raise concerns about countries that do not comply with their human rights obligations and promote nondiscrimination against LGBT people. The UK was one of the founding members of the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) a grouping of 42 like-minded countries working together with civil society to address violence and discrimination against LGBT individuals, and the ongoing criminalisation of same sex conduct in 70 countries.

The UK took over the role of ERC co-chair in June 2019, in partnership with Argentina and will host an international conference on LGBT rights in London on 27-29 May. The conference will address the issues of violence, discrimination and ongoing criminalisation and will set out how the ERC proposes to address those issues with the launch of a new ERC Strategy.

In her speech to the Commonwealth Forums in April 2018, the former Prime Minister set out the UK's readiness to support any member state wanting to reform outdated legislation that makes discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation possible and stressed the importance of our common value of equality, a value that is clearly stated in the Commonwealth Charter. As part of that offer the UK announced a £5.6m programme working with civil society organisations to support those countries seeking to reform outdated discriminatory legislation affecting women, girls and LGBT individuals.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

21 Feb 2020 | HL1490

Asked by: Lord Luce

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made on the implementation of the decisions taken in London in April 2018 by the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Over the past two years, the UK - as Chair-in-Office - has worked closely with our Commonwealth partners to drive collective delivery of the commitments agreed at the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The work is supported by over £500 million of projects to support the Commonwealth in achieving these goals, which are already delivering benefits for member states. For example, over 3,000 women-owned businesses have now received training from the Commonwealth SheTrades project, supporting inclusive economic growth and prosperity. 31 Member States have committed to take action on marine plastic pollution as part of the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance. Also, the Pacific Nationally Determined Contribution Hub was officially opened by the Prime Minister of Fiji last week, helping Pacific Island Countries tackle climate change. The Government will publish a detailed update on the UK's period as Chair-in-Office in the coming months.

6. Debates

[Anti-slavery Projects: Commonwealth](#)

04 Mar 2021 | House of Lords | 810 cc457-471GC

Lords question for short debate on what steps they are taking to promote anti-slavery projects throughout the Commonwealth.

[Women in the Commonwealth: Trade and Investment](#)

11 Mar 2020 | House of Commons | 673 cc160-176WH

Motion that this House has considered trade and investment opportunities for women in the Commonwealth.

[Commonwealth in 2020](#)

09 Mar 2020 | House of Commons | 672 cc564-124

Motion that this House has considered the Commonwealth in 2020.

7. Statements

[UK Commonwealth Chair-in-Office Report 2018-2020](#) 09 Sep 2020 | HLWS436

The Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): In April 2018, the UK hosted the 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The summit was the largest of its kind in our history. 46 Heads of Government and 49 Foreign Ministers met and agreed a range of actions to build a Commonwealth which is fairer, more sustainable, more prosperous, and more secure.

Since then, the UK, as Chair-in-Office, has continued to work with the three pillars of the Commonwealth - its member states, its Secretariat, and its organisations and networks - to deliver commitments made at CHOGM. This work has been supported by over £500 million of UK-funded projects and programmes under the four themes of the summit.

A detailed report, entitled 'Commonwealth Chair-in-Office 2018-20', will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. This succeeds the interim report which the then Foreign Secretary provided to the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Commons on 15th May 2019. It gives a comprehensive overview of outcomes and achievements against CHOGM 2018 commitments. This Statement highlights some of those.

To build a fairer Commonwealth, the UK has worked with member states to support the delivery of 12 years of quality education for all by 2030. The Girl's Education Challenge, for which the UK announced £212 million funding at CHOGM 2018, is now active in 11 Commonwealth countries, working to ensure marginalised girls have access to quality education. On inclusive and accountable democracy and promotion of human rights, the UK has supported Commonwealth Secretariat election observation missions to eight Commonwealth countries, a number of which have since undertaken electoral reform. In Geneva, UK-funded human rights and trade advisors have supported Commonwealth Small States to engage more effectively with international human rights and trade mechanisms. The UK-funded Equality and Justice Alliance has provided support to six Commonwealth countries to repeal or reform outdated legislation which discriminates against, or fails to protect, women, girls and LGBT communities.

To build a more sustainable Commonwealth, the UK has continued to champion the Commonwealth Blue Charter launched at CHOGM18. The 'Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance', co-led by the UK and Vanuatu, now has 34 members which have committed to tackle marine plastic pollution. The UK-funded extension of the Commonwealth Marine Economies programme has supported 17 Small Island Developing States to further develop sustainable and diverse marine economies. On climate change, the UK has co-funded a centre of excellence on Nationally Determined Contributions based in Fiji, which is now working with 10 Commonwealth Pacific countries on their plans to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

To build a more prosperous Commonwealth, the UK has continued to be an advocate for intra-Commonwealth trade and has facilitated the delivery of the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda. The UK has co-led with South Africa work on digital connectivity, and supported Barbados as the lead on regularly connectivity. The UK-funded Trade Facilitation Programme has been working with 18 priority countries to adopt more efficient customs procedures. The UK-funded Commonwealth Standards Network now comprises the national standards bodies of 50 Commonwealth countries, supporting the effective implementation of international standards which increase opportunities for trade. Gender equality has also been at the forefront of our Commonwealth prosperity work: over 3,000 women-owned businesses have so far been supported to enhance their ability to trade; an extension of this programme was announced by the International Development Secretary in January.

To build a more secure Commonwealth, we have prioritised implementation of the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration, helping member states to enhance their cyber security capacity. 38 out of 54 countries have now completed national cyber security capacity reviews – a cornerstone commitment of the Declaration’s implementation plan. Thirteen of these reviews have been completed since CHOGM 2018, of which seven were funded by the UK. We have worked with Commonwealth partners to apply and strengthen legislation on modern slavery and human trafficking. In July 2019, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UK funding, Malawi launched four landmark regulations on human trafficking and labour protection.

Following the postponement of CHOGM 2020, we look forward to the gathering of the Commonwealth family in Kigali next year. In the meantime, the UK will continue to serve the Commonwealth family as Chair-in-Office. In that role, we were pleased to facilitate agreement of a comprehensive statement issued by Commonwealth Leaders on 16 July 2020, setting out their commitment to work collectively with international partners on the full range of responses required to mitigate the many adverse impacts of COVID-19, and to ensure that no one will be left behind.

[Commonwealth Day](#)

11 Mar 2019 | 656 cc75-88

The Minister for Africa (Harriett Baldwin): It is an absolute delight to make this statement today to the House as we celebrate Commonwealth Day together. The UK joins our fellow member states in celebrating the bonds between people, organisations and Governments across 53 countries under the theme of a connected Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth is a unique organisation, rich in diversity yet connected by a common language, common history and common values. There is much to celebrate. Celebrations of these unique connections are taking place right across the UK today. As head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty the Queen attended the service of celebration this afternoon in Westminster Abbey. Many other senior members of the royal family, representatives from all Commonwealth

countries, the Prime Minister, Members of Parliament, representatives from Commonwealth organisations and over 700 schoolchildren also attended the service. Many councils are raising the Commonwealth flag in celebration, from Dorset to Newport to Glasgow, building connections across the Commonwealth at community level. Indeed, just outside Parliament the flags of the 53 nations of the Commonwealth are flying. Along Whitehall, multiple Government Departments are also flying the Commonwealth flag as a symbol of the UK's commitment to the Commonwealth.

In her Commonwealth Day message, Her Majesty the Queen highlighted the collective values we share as a family of nations and the networks of co-operation that we both draw on and contribute to. The Prime Minister's Commonwealth statement, published earlier today, reflects on the UK's role as chair-in-office, driving forward projects that span the Commonwealth, connecting its citizens in shared aims.

Across our diplomatic network, British high commissioners are celebrating today and this week with a variety of events, programme visits and receptions. Celebrations range from a fashion show showcasing recycled materials in Singapore to the Bangladesh women's cricket team visiting a UK-funded programme helping women and children to escape domestic violence. Even embassies in non-Commonwealth countries such as Brazil are celebrating by bringing together Commonwealth colleagues to discuss shared values.

So how is the UK delivering on this, our connected Commonwealth? Since hosting last year's Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, the UK has taken on the position as chair-in-office—a role that we will hold until leaders from the 53 member states reconvene in Rwanda next year. It is a role that we take extremely seriously, but what does it mean in practice? We have four objectives as chair-in-office, and these can be summarised in four words: delivery, voice, solidarity and reform.

We want to deliver the commitments set out in the official Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting communiqué, the leaders' statement, the Commonwealth Blue Charter, the cyber-declaration and the Commonwealth connectivity agenda for trade and investment. We want to promote the voice of the Commonwealth within the rules-based international system; the diversity of the Commonwealth is a strength and an opportunity. We should continue to come together as a collective voice to advocate for the rules-based international system. We want to enhance practical solidarity among Commonwealth members in international organisations by ensuring that we know about one another's candidacies and by briefing one another on the business of regional and wider bodies to which we do not all belong. We want to reinforce the three pillars of the Commonwealth by supporting continued reform of the Commonwealth secretariat to ensure that it is a modern, agile organisation.

Since taking on the role as chair-in-office, we have been working hard to ensure that the Commonwealth delivers on the commitments made by leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. Many

Members will be interested in the progress made on the commitments made by leaders—commitments that will benefit all 2.4 billion citizens.

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April last year, heads made ambitious commitments to build a Commonwealth that is fairer, more sustainable, more prosperous and more secure. Over the last 11 months, the UK has been working hard to ensure that together, we deliver on those commitments. We cannot do this alone and are working closely with the three pillars of the Commonwealth—our 52 fellow member states, the Commonwealth secretariat and the many Commonwealth organisations and networks. This includes the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, in which many hon. Members here play active roles. These three pillars demonstrate a connected Commonwealth in action.

Her Majesty's Government have allocated over £500 million towards projects designed to deliver on the Commonwealth Heads of Government commitments. Let me highlight just a few examples of the significant progress that we have been making, from oceans to cyber-security and from trade facilitation to education.

We are building a more sustainable future through our action on the Commonwealth Blue Charter. The UK is co-leading with Vanuatu the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance. Twenty-four Commonwealth member states from every region have already joined this alliance to tackle marine plastic pollution and have committed to concrete action that will reduce the scourge of plastics in the oceans. There are eight other action groups of member states targeted at different challenges to the oceans' sustainability. In addition, with UK funds and expertise, the Commonwealth marine economies programme is facilitating the creation of sustainable marine economies in 17 Commonwealth island states, promoting growth, innovation, jobs and investment while safeguarding healthy seas and ecosystems.

We are building a more secure future through programmes to strengthen countries' cyber-resilience. In partnership with the World Bank, we are enabling national cyber-security reviews. In Africa, these have already been delivered in Nigeria, the Gambia, Mauritius and Lesotho. We have established an African cyber-security fellowship network and helped nine African Commonwealth countries to share expertise and build capacity in critical information infrastructure protection. We are also funding training events that will benefit the cyber-security of 37 Commonwealth countries.

We are building a more prosperous future by working with Commonwealth partners to boost intra-Commonwealth trade and investment. Since its launch last year, the UK-funded Commonwealth trade facilitation programme has already increased the capacity and capability of customs organisations in 18 Commonwealth countries. The UK and South Africa recently announced that we would co-lead the digital connectivity element of the Commonwealth connectivity agenda to boost inclusive growth. We are also promoting inclusive and sustainable trade through the SheTrades in the Commonwealth programme. More than 2,300 women-owned businesses have signed

up to this initiative, which will also increase women's participation in international trade.

We are also improving employment prospects for young people through training and skills development programmes. We are building a fairer future through supporting the provision of 12 years of quality education for girls and boys. In particular, we are providing over £200 million of support for girls' education in nine Commonwealth African countries. During Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister offered to help Commonwealth partners who wished to address legacies of legislation that discriminates against women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender citizens. We are supporting collaboration between civil society and Governments that have responded positively to this offer.

The three pillars of the Commonwealth have made important progress, delivering on the Commonwealth Heads of Government commitments, and we will continue to drive this engagement in the year ahead to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting 2020 in Rwanda. This Government are determined to make the most of our two years as chair-in-office. As we mark the 70th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth next month, we also want to ensure that it can meet future challenges—from climate change to cyber-attacks—and to seize the opportunities from the organisation's huge diversity and global reach. As I said last week, we will work tirelessly with our Commonwealth partners to build a fairer, more sustainable, more prosperous and more secure Commonwealth. I commend this statement to the House.

[Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting: Update on delivery](#)

14 Jan 2019 | HCWS1247

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

(Jeremy Hunt): In April, the UK hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The summit was the largest of its kind in our history. 46 Heads of Government and 49 Foreign Ministers met and agreed a range of actions to build a Commonwealth that is fairer, more sustainable, more prosperous, and more secure.

As Chair-in-Office, the UK has continued to work with the three pillars of the Commonwealth – the Commonwealth Secretariat, its member states, and its organisations and networks to deliver on commitments made at CHOGM. To support this work, the UK announced over £500 million of projects under the four themes discussed at the summit. An overview of these commitments and projects has been placed in the Library of the House and I am pleased to report progress in a number of areas today.

To build a fairer Commonwealth, the UK is supporting nine Commonwealth member states deliver 12 years of quality education for girls by 2030. I co-chaired the first meeting of the Platform for Girls' Education with the Kenyan Education Minister, Amina Mohamed, in September. The Platform will work together throughout the UK's period

as Chair-in-Office and report on progress ahead of the CHOGM 2020 in Rwanda. The UK has also partnered with the Secretariat for Pacific Communities to launch the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project, which will enable Pacific leaders to champion and advance human rights by strengthening the capacity of their countries to deliver on their international human rights commitments. Reinforcing the belief that effective Parliaments are one of the principal institutions of any functioning democracy, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association launched updated benchmarks for democratic legislatures in November. Following the offer made by my right honourable Friend the Prime Minister, a number of Commonwealth countries have expressed interest in reviewing and reforming outdated legislation that makes it possible to discriminate on the grounds of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The Equality and Justice Alliance has held the first meeting of its Group of Experts, convened the first regional dialogue of high-level champions of reform, and has engaged national and regional civil society to support this work.

To build a more sustainable Commonwealth, the UK is delivering on the Commonwealth Blue Charter by helping member states protect and sustainably develop the ocean. Twenty-three Commonwealth countries have signed up to the UK and Vanuatu led 'Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance' (CCOA) to tackle marine plastic pollution. Two of these countries joined the Alliance at the first CCOA Ministerial Meeting chaired by my noble Friend Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth, in the margins of the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference in Nairobi in November. During her visit to Kenya, my right honourable Friend, the Prime Minister also announced a Young Leaders' Plastic Challenge Badge to help an estimated 100,000 young people in the Commonwealth become leaders in raising awareness about reducing plastic consumption. In response to the challenge of climate change, the UK and New Zealand are also providing support for the establishment of a Regional Pacific Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Hub, which will help Pacific Island Countries implement the Paris Agreement.

To build a more prosperous Commonwealth, the UK is helping member states harness trade and investment as a means of delivering inclusive economic growth and prosperity. The Commonwealth Trade Facilitation Programme is helping member states implement the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement, creating more efficient customs procedures and boosting intra-Commonwealth trade. Scoping missions have already taken place in Eswatini, Tonga and Zambia; and technical support has already been delivered in Sierra Leone and Malawi. In October, Guyana became the first country to partner with the UK-funded Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme to develop a national Maritime Economy Plan. The programme is supporting the sustainable development and growth of 17 Commonwealth Small Island Developing States. To support inclusive and sustainable trade, the UK has partnered with the International Trade Centre to deliver 'SheTrades Commonwealth'. The project aims to promote women's economic empowerment by helping women-owned businesses to trade internationally. Following its launch in Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria, over 2,300 women entrepreneurs have

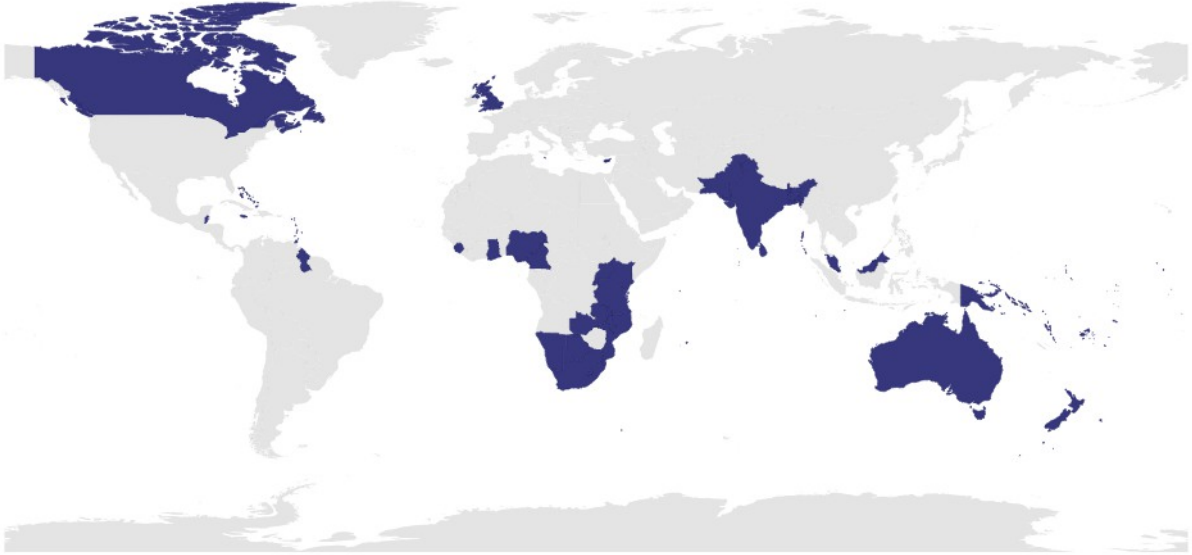
registered with the initiative and 518 companies have attended capacity building events.

To build a more secure Commonwealth, the UK is enhancing cooperation on cyber security by helping member states identify and address vulnerabilities and gaps in capacity. In support of the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration, the UK has partnered with the World Bank to deliver national cyber security reviews in a range of member states. We are on track to meet the commitment for every Commonwealth member state to voluntarily undertake a review by CHOGM 2020. The UK is also enabling Commonwealth countries to strengthen their national responses to modern slavery. This will include a legislative drafting seminar in March 2019 that will bring together parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth to consider how their legislation and wider national responses to modern slavery can be strengthened. Further training on how to tackle online child exploitation will be provided to 19 Commonwealth countries over the next 18 months.

Finally, we have sought to strengthen cooperation in international organisations. In Geneva, my noble Friend Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon hosted a meeting of Commonwealth Permanent Representatives to discuss greater cooperation between Commonwealth Missions in advance of the Human Rights Council. New Zealand has hosted two similar meetings to discuss WTO reform. My right honourable Friend, the Prime Minister also included a passage on the Commonwealth in her speech to the UN General Assembly. She spoke explicitly as Commonwealth Chair-in-Office on behalf of the Heads of Government of 53 Commonwealth countries – over a quarter of the UN membership – to reaffirm their shared commitment to work together within a rules based international system to address shared global challenges.

8. Annex: Map of Member States

[Commonwealth member countries](#)



A full list of member countries is also available via the link

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).