

# His Majesty King Charles III's Reception for Commonwealth Leaders at Buckingham Palace

On the eve of the Coronation | 5 May 2023

## Remarks by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Welcome to Marlborough House – the home and headquarters of our Commonwealth Family – for this unique and remarkable occasion.

In a few moments we will greet His Majesty The King, so we can share our best wishes with him ahead of his Coronation tomorrow.

Our decision to come together today means a lot to him, it means a lot to me, and I hope it reminds us all that we are at our best when we are together, as a family.

I thank President Kagame as our Chair-in-Office for his leadership today.

I recognise His Highness Tuimaleali'ifano Va'aletō'a Sualauvi II, the Head of State of Samoa – our next Chair-in-Office.

I thank President Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka, whose proposal that we all met today was so widely supported.

And I warmly welcome those of you who are with us for the first time – President Ali Bongo of Gabon and President Faure Gnassingbé of Togo, who join a Commonwealth Leaders event for the first time – and all of you who have taken office since CHOGM [the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting] in Kigali last year.

Opportunities for leaders to meet between CHOGMs are rare, but every opportunity to come together is important.

For us to gather for such an historic occasion is exceptional.

The only other time a new Head of the Commonwealth has been crowned, in 1953, our family was a group of nine.

Today, we gather as 56 free, independent and equal nations.

PAGE 1/2



The Commonwealth  
**Forging a Sustainable and  
Peaceful Common Future**

TheCommonwealth.org/commonwealthday  
@commonwealthsec @commonwealthsec  
@commonwealth\_sec  
#CommonwealthDay

And as I look around this room, I am reminded of how special our Commonwealth is:

In our vastness and in our connectedness

In our diversity and in our unity

In our resilience and in our genius

In our experience and in our youth

In our great qualities, and in our extraordinary potential.

It is in these moments when we are together – face to face, committed and bold – that the Commonwealth's great strengths are most apparent.

Because time and again, we choose to stand together.

Together against injustice.

Together in the face of the world's great challenges.

Together and resolute, with shared determination, to build a better future.

Do not forget Commonwealth unity against Apartheid.

Do not forget that Commonwealth leaders were calling for action on climate change in Langkawi before the international system even had a process for negotiation.

And do not forget that today, the Commonwealth is at the forefront of efforts to make global finance work for the vulnerable, and to help all our countries seize the opportunities of digitalisation and technological progress.

As The King said in March, our Commonwealth's near boundless potential as a force for good in the world demands our highest ambition.

That potential lies in the values and advantages we share:

In our ability to confront and confound our history, and be confident about our shared future;

In our ability – during times of uncertainty and strife – to find common ground;

In our ability to find common solutions and share best practices, co-creating progress from the ground up;

And in our ability to flourish and grow because of what we stand for and what we can deliver, even when the world feels to many as though it is fracturing.

Excellencies, we cannot diminish the importance of the challenges we face, but together we are more than equal to them.

And we are more than capable of ensuring that our 1.5 billion young people, and the generations which will follow, inherit a more peaceful and sustainable common future; rooted in our principles, across all regions and cultures.

I thank you all for being here.

I greatly look forward to our discussions today.

And I look forward to marking this moment of history with you all.

*[As delivered.]*