



Commonwealth Secretary-General

As 2023 draws to a close, we reflect on a year of immense change and challenge in our world.

The global economic, environmental and security crises we have witnessed are grave and complex, and their impacts continue to be felt. In every region of our Commonwealth, our nations are exposed to huge economic pressures. They feel the full force of extreme heat, drought, storms, floods, fires and rising seas, and the tremors of conflict and instability reverberate around the world. Yet in the face of these very real threats, the 56 nations, and 2.5 billion people of the Commonwealth have shown extraordinary resolve.

Throughout this Year of Youth, I have been particularly inspired by the hope and energy which drive our young people, as they rise to global challenges not of their making. When our leaders came together ahead of the magnificent coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, the Head of our Commonwealth Family, they were clear in their commitment to build a more resilient, sustainable common future for our 1.5 billion young people.

Again and again, our Commonwealth Family has united to turn their resolve into shared action: to tackle the challenges we face today, and to unleash the benefits of innovation and progress across every sector, from health, education and youth empowerment to energy, infrastructure, and trade.

Next year marks the 75th birthday of the Modern Commonwealth. What started as a group of eight countries, brought together in the shadow of war to bring a touch of healing to kinships which were changing, today connects one-third of humanity through common values and shared action and stands as a beacon within the international system.

As His Majesty said on Commonwealth Day, our near-boundless potential as a force for good demands our highest ambition and challenges us to unite and be bold. That ambition, that unity, and that boldness, will guide us through 2024, as we continue the Commonwealth Year of Youth, and look towards our next Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa.

I fiercely believe that our shared commitment to peace, prosperity and the common good which has served us for more than seven decades, will continue to sustain us through every challenge, and enable us to seize every opportunity.

On behalf of the whole Commonwealth, I wish you all a peaceful, relaxing, and hopeful season of goodwill, and I look with confidence and optimism to a momentous year ahead.

Happy Christmas.

The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC