



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
AT THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB

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Young people compete for chance to tell visiting Commonwealth leaders what Trinidad & Tobago can teach the world

Today marks the launch of the Trinidad & Tobago Commonwealth Essay Competition. Jointly run by the National Secretariat for CHOGM 2009 and the Royal Commonwealth Society, the competition gives young nationals of Trinidad and Tobago the chance to tell leaders visiting for CHOGM what they think Trinidad & Tobago can teach the world.

The competition is open to young people under 14 years old and 14-18 years old. The first-prize winner in the 14-18 age category, will be given the chance to travel, with a parent or guardian, to London where the winner will take part in one of the Commonwealth's highest-profile events: the Commonwealth Day Observance in Westminster Abbey, attended by Her Majesty The Queen. In the under 14 age category, the first prize entrant will win a laptop computer.

In Port of Spain on 26 November, twenty highly commended entrants will be brought together at the Commonwealth Youth Forum. There, they will have the chance to participate in a workshop with leading writers. Prime Minister, Patrick Manning, will then present prizes at a special ceremony.

The Essay Competition aims to encourage young people of Trinidad and Tobago to engage with the Commonwealth and CHOGM 2009. It also gives them the chance to have their voice heard by Commonwealth leaders and it encourages them to aspire towards high standards of academic scholarship and creative writing.

The competition closes on **Friday 16 October 2009**. To find out how to enter, download a flyer here: <http://www.thercs.org/society/206>.

CHOGM 2009:

The biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will be held in Port of Spain from 27-29 November 2009. The CHOGM will be attended by Heads of Government from 53 Commonwealth nations and H.M. The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth. The inter-governmental meeting will be preceded by the Youth Forum from 21-29 November, the People's Forum from 23-26 November, and the Business Forum from 23-26 November. For more information, see the CHOGM website at www.chogm2009.org.

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS):

Founded in 1868, the RCS is the oldest and largest civil society organisation devoted to the Commonwealth. It conducts a range of events and activities aimed at promoting international understanding. Headquartered at the Commonwealth Club in London, the RCS has some 5000 members in the UK and a presence in some 40 Commonwealth countries through a network of branches and Commonwealth societies. The RCS conducts a number of educational, youth and cultural programmes across the Commonwealth, including one of the world's largest school essay competitions and a youth leadership programme. It also organises numerous events dealing with issues of Commonwealth interest, including an annual Observance with Her Majesty The Queen, and a high-profile events programme in London and across its branch network.

The Commonwealth:

The modern Commonwealth was established with 8 members in 1949. In 2009, it has 53 members with a total population of nearly 2 billion. It is an association of governments and peoples, built around shared language, institutions, challenges, aspirations and values. The Commonwealth promotes democracy, development, and diversity within its member countries and across the world.

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