



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
AT THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB

Press release: 1st October 2009

Peter Kellner takes up post as Chairman of Royal Commonwealth Society

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) has appointed Peter Kellner as its new Chairman.

Peter Kellner is the President of YouGov, a research, opinion polling and consulting organisation. Formerly the political analyst of BBC Newsnight, over the last 30 years Peter has also been a journalist with the Sunday Times, the Independent, New Statesman and Evening Standard. He was a visiting fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford and the Institute for Policy Studies. He is married to Baroness Catherine Ashton, the European Trade Commissioner.

Peter has sat on the RCS Council since 2007. His appointment follows a comprehensive open recruitment process led by independent executive search company, Saxton Bampfylde.

Peter Kellner said, "The RCS is an organisation with a proud history and a great future. I look forward to helping it become an increasingly active and important Commonwealth centre."

Sir Michael McWilliam, who has been interim RCS Chairman since March 2009, said "I am delighted that Peter Kellner is taking up this post. He is deeply committed to the aims of the RCS and will be an influential advocate of its cause. He brings a wealth of experience to the role and I am certain that the RCS will benefit greatly from his leadership."

Founded in 1868, the RCS is the oldest and largest non-governmental organisation devoted to Commonwealth affairs. In July 2009, it launched the Commonwealth Conversation, the largest public consultation on the future of the Commonwealth ever undertaken. It also runs a range of events, youth and educational projects to promote international understanding.

Notes to Editors

The RCS: The RCS is the oldest and largest civil society organisation devoted to the Commonwealth. Founded in 1868, the RCS 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 Commonwealth Conversation: The Commonwealth Conversation was launched in London at the Headquarters of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) on Monday, 20 July 2009 by the Director of the RCS and UK Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The centrepiece of the Commonwealth Conversation is an open, interactive website hosting discussions to which anyone can contribute. The Conversation also involves offline discussion groups, expert meetings and other events around the Commonwealth. Findings from the Conversation will be presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009. A final report will be published in early 2010. **Website:** www.thecommonwealthconversation.org

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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