



EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDDAY ON WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2014

PRESS RELEASE: 19 November 2014

From Lahore to Buckingham Palace: Pakistani girl triumphs in schools' international writing competition

On Wednesday 19th November, fifteen year old Raniya Hosain the Senior Winner of the Commonwealth Essay Competition 2014, provided a shining example for girls in education across Pakistan and the Commonwealth as she attended a Reception at Buckingham Palace hosted by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall on behalf of HM The Queen.

A pupil at Lahore College of Arts and Sciences (LACAS), Pakistan, Raniya attended the event with her teacher, Ms Eram Abid Hassan. Also attending the event were: the Junior Winner, ten-year-old Max de Bourcier, a pupil at St Michael's Preparatory School in Jersey; the Senior Runner-up, sixteen-year-old Selina Xu, a pupil at Nanyang Girls' High School in Singapore; and, the Junior Runner-up, thirteen-year-old Leah Annia Plante-Winer, a pupil at The Study, Canada.

Guests at the Reception included the Nigerian Poet and Novelist, Ben Okri, the Ghanaian Author, Margaret Busby, and the Ugandan Author and Winner of the 2014 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi.

Held in the Throne Room, the event was both an opportunity to recognise the achievement of the winners and an occasion to mark the launch of the 2015 competition, renamed as 'The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition', in honour of HM The Queen's role as both Head of the Commonwealth and Patron of the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS).

The competition, which is run by the RCS in partnership with [Cambridge University Press](#) and in 2014 was sponsored by The Queen's Trust, received nearly 10,000 entries, made up of 6,074 Junior-level entries and 3,859 Senior-level entries from 44 countries and territories across the Commonwealth.

Raniya said: *"When I found out about my success I was numb with shock, and then the elation set in. It's amazing to be here with my fellow winners from different parts of the Commonwealth."*

Recognising the importance of education and familial support, **Raniya continued:** *"I have a twin sister, a younger brother and countless cousins. My love of writing has been encouraged by every one of them. My school, Lahore College of Arts and Sciences, and all of my English teachers, especially my tenth grade English teacher, have given me so many opportunities over the years and have helped me become the person I am."*

Mike Lake CBE, Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society said: *"The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition is a fascinating competition, not least because it's a microcosm of growing up with the pressures of 21st century life. This year's winners, drawn from the four corners of the globe, wrote on different topics, but are united in one thing – their determination to have their voices heard. That is what lies at the heart of the competition. Youth voice, a perspective vital to the future of the Commonwealth."*

Notes to Editors

Senior Winner: *Team Commonwealth! How would you describe what your country has to offer other members of the team?* Raniya Hosain, age 15, Lahore College of Arts and Sciences in Pakistan
<https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Senior-Winner-Raniya-Hosain.pdf>

Senior Runner-up: *What part does competition play in people's daily lives?* Selina Xu, age 16, Nanyang Girls' High School in Singapore <https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Senior-Runner-up-Selina-Xu.pdf>

Junior Winner: *Being a Team Player*, Max de Bourcier, age 10, St Michael's Preparatory School in Jersey UK <https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Junior-Winner-Max-de-Bourcier.pdf>

Junior Runner up: *United We Stand*, Leah Annia Plante-Wiener, age 13, The Study in Canada
<https://www.thercs.org/assets/Essay-Competition/2014-Junior-Runner-up-Leah-Annia-Plante-Wiener.pdf>

The Commonwealth Essay Competition was founded in 1883 and is the world's oldest and largest schools' international writing contest. For 2014 the competition was sponsored by Cambridge University Press and The Queen's Trust. It received nearly 10,000 entries from more than 500 schools in 44 Commonwealth countries and territories.

The theme of the 2014 competition was the Commonwealth Year Theme, 'Team Commonwealth'. It touched upon the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and the spirit of friendship between Commonwealth nations.

From 2015, the contest will be known as 'The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition', in honour of HM Queen Elizabeth II's role as both Head of the Commonwealth and Patron of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

The Royal Commonwealth Society is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Founded in 1868, the Society is constituted by Royal Charter (amended 2013) and as a charity in England and Wales (226748). It is non-partisan and independent of governments.

The Society engages with its youth, civil society, business and governmental networks to address issues that matter to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Its primary focus is the promotion of young people throughout the Commonwealth.

Media Enquiries:

Louise Guillaume, Royal Commonwealth Society
T: +44 (0)20 3727 4306 | E: louise.guillaume@thercs.org