



33FIFTY

33Fifty: The Commonwealth Youth Leadership Programme

**PRESS RELEASE: 22 October 2013**

**Young International Climate Champion meets the Queen's Baton Relay team in Bangladesh and highlights the importance of literacy among young women and girls.**

Last week Sareka Jahan, a delegate for Bangladesh at Global Climate Conferences under the United Nations Framework for Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC), added her message to the 33Fifty Baton Book that is accompanying the Queen's Baton Relay across the 70 countries and territories taking part in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

At an event in Dhaka, Sareka wrote: "the biggest challenge for today's youth is to ensure that tomorrow's youth have a louder voice, and that female voices are as strong as the male voices."

Sareka Jahan, a graduate of International Relations from the University of Dhaka, was chosen to sign the book because of her work with vulnerable communities, especially with women and people with disabilities, in disaster risk zones in Bangladesh. She has led unique projects which have mainstreamed gender issues in areas prone to natural disasters and has acted as a Country Facilitator for Bangladesh under the United Nations Centre for Regional Development. Of particular note has been her work to secure climate change and environmental debates in the Secondary Schools' curriculum in Bangladesh.

33% of the world's population lives in the Commonwealth and 50% of those are under 25. The Baton Book, specially produced by De La Rue, is part of 33Fifty, a leadership programme for Commonwealth citizens aged between 18 and 25 run by the Royal Commonwealth Society and Common Purpose. It aims to develop young leaders who bring people together, reconcile difference and lead change.

The Baton Book is an opportunity for one young person from each country or territory the baton visits to send a message to Glasgow 2014, in particular to the participants of the 33Fifty programme that will take place prior to the Games. Applications for 33Fifty opened on Wednesday 16 October and 100 participants will be chosen from across the Commonwealth. See [www.33fifty.org](http://www.33fifty.org).

**Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Michael Lake, said:** "On its return to Glasgow, having travelled 190,000 kilometres across the Commonwealth, the Baton Book will contain messages from 70 young people spanning six continents. Not only is the book a wonderful expression of Commonwealth citizenship, but it's an opportunity for young people to highlight the issues that are important to them as part of the most high profile event in the Commonwealth calendar – the Commonwealth Games."

**CEO of Common Purpose Charitable Trust, Julia Middleton, said:** "If fifty percent of the Commonwealth's population is under 25, that's over 1 billion people. I sometimes wonder what proportion of the Commonwealth's leaders are over 55. I hope that this book - as it travels across the Commonwealth with the Queen's Baton - will give that younger fifty percent more of a voice for people like me to hear."

**Group Director of Communications at De La Rue, Robert Hutchison, said:** "At the completion of its journey, this unique, handmade document will carry the inspirational words and messages of the Commonwealth's young people to the leaders of the future. De La Rue is proud to be part of 33Fifty's Baton Book initiative and looks forward to seeing the book's pages filled by the young signatories as it travels the world."



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## Notes to Editors

**33Fifty** will form part of the official programme of cultural and educational events which runs parallel to the Games. It will be delivered by the Royal Commonwealth Society and Common Purpose, with half of the overall funding provided by the Scottish Government and further sponsorship provided by The Weir Group PLC.

**The Royal Commonwealth Society** is the oldest and largest civil society organisation devoted to the Commonwealth. Founded in 1868, it conducts a range of events, research and activities aimed at promoting international understanding. The RCS has a global membership and a presence in over 40 Commonwealth countries through a network of branches and Commonwealth societies. The RCS is a registered charity in England and Wales. (226748). Website: [www.thercs.org](http://www.thercs.org) Twitter: [@TheRCSLondon](https://twitter.com/TheRCSLondon)

**Common Purpose:** Common Purpose is an independent, international leadership development organisation. We give people from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors the inspiration, skills and connections to become better leaders at work and in society. We develop their ability to work together, innovate and to thrive in different cultures - this helps people, organisations, cities and regions to succeed.

Founded in 1989 as a not-for-profit social enterprise, Common Purpose is both local and global. We run local courses for leaders in 35 cities (and growing) across the world and global programmes for leaders from over 100 countries across six continents. 4,000 leaders each year become Common Purpose alumni. Website: [www.commonpurpose.org](http://www.commonpurpose.org) Twitter: [@CommonPurpose](https://twitter.com/CommonPurpose)

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