



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

PRESS RELEASE: Civil Society groups meet to discuss Human Rights and the newly agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2015.

On the second day of side events to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malta, civil society groups have met to discuss justice and the new 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)'s with the main emphasis on access to justice and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The event highlighted the similarities with the core values of the modern Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, CIVICUS, Integra Foundation, and The Royal Commonwealth Society have been discussing how Goal 16 of the newly agreed SDG's can be achieved by Civil Society and governments working together.

Goal 16 of the Global Goals commits all governments to effectively combine development and justice. The main emphasis is on access to justice and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and respecting the basic values of the Commonwealth.

Kai Reddy, Senior Programme Officer at the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative said:

“Human rights tend to fall very low down the scale of priorities for most governments. It's not that they don't want to address it and deal with it, they tend to focus on other issues that to them seem to be more pertinent.

But I am hoping there will be considerable progress made. This CHOGM is a particularly special event because with a new Secretary General being elected, it opens things up,” Reddy said.

BROADCASTERS, AGENCIES AND ONLINE VIDEO SITES - A free-to-use Video News Release is available for download below:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B99sotFuWzoWRHhZemJ4dzlvclk/view?usp=sharing>

Video format: Quicktime H.264 1080i HD.

Contents:

-GVs of CHRI forum

Interviews/Grabs:

- Kai Reddy, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- Oli Henman, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
- Lewis Brooks, Royal Commonwealth Society

TOMORROW: A free to use VNR focusing on the CHOGM Youth Forum and the opening of the first Women's Forum.

Notes to editors:

The Commonwealth People's Forum is being held at the Corinthia Hotel, St Julian's Bay, Malta between the 23rd-26th November and will host civil society representatives from across the Commonwealth to discuss 'What Makes Societies Resilient?'.

The first ever Commonwealth Women's Forum will be opened tonight by The Hon Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta, Her Excellency Ms Coleiro Preca and His Excellency Kamallesh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General. It is being held at the Intercontinental Hotel, St Julian's, Malta between the 22nd-24th November. Approximately 350 delegates will discuss the theme 'Women Ahead Be all that You Can Be'.

The Commonwealth Business Forum is being held at the Hilton Hotel, St Julians, Malta between the 24th-26th November. More than a thousand delegates will use the space for high level dialogue between business and Government leaders from the Commonwealth and beyond.

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 is a charity in England and Wales (226748). 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. www.thercs.org

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organisation, mandated to ensure the practical realisation of human rights in the countries of the Commonwealth. In 1987, several Commonwealth associations founded CHRI because they felt that while the member countries had both a common set of values and legal principles from which to work and a forum within which to promote human rights.

See their report, Civil Society and the Commonwealth:

http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/CHOGM/CHOGM_Report-press-Final%20Web.pdf

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