



Press Statement: 24 March 2015

The Royal Commonwealth Society and Kaleidoscope Trust today released a report 'Collaboration and Consensus: Building a constructive Commonwealth approach to LGBT rights'. The report examines some of the ways in which Commonwealth institutions, nations and civil society can begin to use some of the unique mechanisms of the Commonwealth to address discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Of the 53 Commonwealth member states, 41 have laws that act to criminalise LGBT people. However, while the report presents the challenges caused by discriminatory legislation and attitudes, it also highlights the positive developments that are arising in law, Commonwealth actions and national processes. The report investigates how the strengths of the Commonwealth can be used to move away from the perceived polarisation within the Commonwealth and towards a Commonwealth consensus.

Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Michael Lake said:

"The Commonwealth community has opportunities and responsibilities for many things that can make life better for people. It is important that we can deal with difficult and contentious issues whilst making the most of the benefits that the Commonwealth offers."

The Kaleidoscope Trust's Acting Executive Director, Alistair Stewart added:

"The colonial history of the Commonwealth has left it with a serious problem combatting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This ground-breaking piece of work begins to map out some uniquely Commonwealth solutions to this problem - solutions that play to the Commonwealth's strengths and could make it an effective forum for positive change for the millions of LGBT people that live across its member states."

The full report can be downloaded from the Royal Commonwealth Society's website:

<https://www.thercs.org/assets/Research-/LGBTCitizenshipReport-130315-FINAL.pdf>

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