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PRESS RELEASE: Students from the Nigerian Schools Foundation-NSF(UK) celebrate Commonwealth Day at Westminster Abbey with Her Majesty The Queen.

On Monday 13 March, students from the Nigerian Schools Foundation-NSF(UK) in London joined 800 children and young people from across the UK at the Commonwealth Service in Westminster Abbey, in celebration of Commonwealth Day. Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, attended, accompanied by TRH The Duke of Edinburgh, The Prince of Wales, The Duchess of Cornwall, Prince Henry of Wales, The Duke of York and The Earl of Wessex. High Commissioners, dignitaries from across the UK and around the Commonwealth, senior politicians and faith leaders were also present.

The Service celebrated the 2017 Commonwealth theme of 'A Peace-building Commonwealth', reaffirming the Commonwealth Charter principle that: 'international peace and security, sustainable economic growth and development and the rule of law are essential to the progress and prosperity of all'. The aim of the Service was to celebrate the unity, diversity and linkages of the modern Commonwealth and to foster greater understanding of the Commonwealth's achievements and role.

Speakers at the Service included the Prime Minister of Malta and Commonwealth Chair-in-Office the Hon Dr Joseph Muscat MP and Cameroonian peace advocate Achaleke Christian Leke, a former victim of radicalisation and violence. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, led the **Act of Affirmation to the Commonwealth**.

Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill, DBE and Ms Fadumo Olow, a young Muslim woman from the Youth Sport Trust, processed The Queen's Baton to the High Altar with Commonwealth athletes **Anna Meares OAM** and **Kurt Fearnley OAM**.

The audience enjoyed performances by Australian musician, **Cody Simpson**, British spoken-word performer, **George the Poet**, and Canadian Soprano, **Measha Brueggergosman**. The event was broadcast live on BBC One and relayed live on BBC World Service.

Notes to Editors:

Commonwealth Day is marked annually on the second Monday in March. It is a celebration of the Commonwealth's rich diversity and an opportunity to promote understanding on global issues, international cooperation and the work of Commonwealth civil society organisations. In 2017, Commonwealth organisations are focusing on the theme '[A Peace-building Commonwealth](#)'.

Celebrations to mark Commonwealth Day take place around the world. The Service at Westminster Abbey in London is organised by The Royal Commonwealth Society, on behalf of the Council of Commonwealth Societies. Further details can be found at www.thercs.org.

The Royal Commonwealth Society is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Through youth empowerment, education and advocacy, the Society promotes the value and the values of the Commonwealth, championing human rights, democracy and sustainable development across its 52 member states. Founded in 1868, The Royal Commonwealth Society is constituted by Royal Charter. www.thercs.org

The Commonwealth was established with 8 members in 1949. In 2017, it has 52 members with a combined population of almost 2.5 billion. It is a voluntary association of governments and peoples, built around shared language, institutions, challenges, aspirations and values. Commonwealth countries work together to promote common values: democracy, freedom, peace, the rule of law and opportunity for all. Her Majesty The Queen is Head of the Commonwealth. www.thecommonwealth.org

Media contacts:

Rachel Ilett, Media and Communications Officer, The Royal Commonwealth Society
E: rachel.ilett@thercs.org | T: +44 (0)20 3727 4318 | M: +44 (0)7718 476 234