As social creatures, human beings develop and make progress by living, learning, working and playing together in communities. We share experience and learn from what those around us do; by emulating what we admire we can in turn inspire others through our own example and achievement. The Commonwealth, through its interconnected networks, sustains a vibrant ecosystem of opportunity for us to do this on a scale that is vast and global, yet very human in expression. Our great strength as a family of nations, and of peoples growing together organically, is our ability to evolve and adjust to changing circumstances – whether in the field of human rights, democracy or trade.

We see such adaptation in the natural world, and it is just as necessary in the technological world, and for fruitful cooperation among nations and in local communities. So the current focus for thinking and action in and by the Commonwealth is on Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming.

We are more aware than ever how what any single country does can affect for good or ill the well-being of our entire world and the welfare of everyone with whom we share it. This beautiful blue planet is held in common trust by us all for the generations who follow.

An impressive example of how our member countries come together to pool knowledge and resources which deliver transformational change through innovation is the Commonwealth Blue Charter. It provides a
dynamic framework within which our member countries commit
to working together on ocean health and to use marine resources in
sustainable ways.

When Commonwealth Heads of Government meet in Rwanda later this
year, we can expect them to agree on new collaborative programmes
on a range of issues, including democratic governance, and the
empowerment of women and youth. Most importantly, there will be fresh
commitment to practical action on the environment and living lands. This
will be an important staging post on the way towards delivering more
ambitious national commitments when COP 26 is hosted by the United
Kingdom in November. These will carry forward the impressive record of
Commonwealth engagement on climate and regenerative development.

The pioneering Langkawi Declaration on the Environment, made as long
ago as 1989 when Commonwealth leaders met in Malaysia, recognised
that any delay in addressing the impending climate crisis increased the
existential threats to our common home: planet Earth. We have moved
a long way since then, and much has happened which is positive. Yet we
know that time is running out, and the need to move from declaration
to implementation becomes more urgent with every year that passes.
We may be the first generation to have truly experienced the tragic
consequences of this climate crisis, yet we are perhaps the last with the
opportunity to take action to reverse it.

Friendship, kinship and affinity among the people of our member
countries make it easier for us to coordinate and deliver such positive
change swiftly in ways that help to ensure no one is left behind.
Respect and understanding based on goodwill raise awareness in the
Commonwealth of the particular needs of vulnerable, remote and
marginalised communities, wherever they are and whatever their needs.

Our conviction is that with common purpose and by learning from one
another, all can give and all can gain. This approach leads to innovation
that transforms lives and livelihoods so that there is inclusive progress
and greater prosperity in which all can share.

It inspires us to encourage ourselves and others to more profound
depths of co-operation and greater heights of achievement. So taking
our cue from the theme, we can each commit this Commonwealth Day
to join with others and bring change by doing something new.