

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, has raised the Commonwealth Flag for Peace at a ceremony in London on Commonwealth Day.

The Secretary-General was joined by Commonwealth leaders, Ministers and youth representatives to raise the specially-designed flag, created as part of efforts to promote 2023 as the Commonwealth Year of Peace across the family of nations.

Speaking at the ceremony, at Marlborough House, London – the headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Secretary-General said: “We join every city across the United Kingdom, and young people in capitals across the Commonwealth, in proudly raising this Flag for Peace towards the heavens.

“As we celebrate the tenth anniversary of our Charter, in this Commonwealth Year of Youth and Peace, we raise the Peace Flag as a fitting emblem to our commitment to each other, and to the world.

“Peace is precious. It is not guaranteed. It takes work, patience and courage.

“And in the task of building and protecting peace everywhere, for everyone, our Commonwealth values are our guide.

“Thank you all for sharing in this moment, and for renewing our shared commitment to our values and to each other.”

To enable them to observe and contribute towards Commonwealth Day, the Peace Flags were given to young people across Commonwealth countries to help represent the 1.5 billion under-30s living in the 56 countries.

They helped raise the flags, helping to reaffirm the Commonwealth’s commitment to the Commonwealth Charter – which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year – and prioritise and include young people in the building of a peaceful and sustainable future.

This year also marks the Year of Youth, as mandated by the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

The Commonwealth Flag for Peace initiative is supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Queen’s Commonwealth Trust, the Royal Commonwealth Society and Bruno Peek, Pageantmaster, in tribute to Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This is the first Commonwealth Day since her passing.

The flag features a white dove of peace in the bottom right-hand corner of the Commonwealth flag, symbolising the shared values and principles of the Commonwealth, including co-operation on economic and social development, diversity, respect, friendship and the promotion of peace around the world.

Hon Vincent Biruta, Rwanda's Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave a speech as outgoing Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth.

HE Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa, also gave a speech as the future Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth. The next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will be held in Apia, Samoa in 2024.

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal sovereign states. Our combined population is 2.5 billion, of which more than 60 per cent is aged 29 or under. The Commonwealth Secretariat supports member countries to build democratic and inclusive institutions, strengthen governance and promote justice and human rights. Our work helps to grow economies and boost trade, deliver national resilience, empower young people, and address threats such as climate change, debt, and inequality. Commonwealth Secretary-General raises Peace Flag to mark Commonwealth Day