

**DON'T VOTE FOR POLITICS
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**VOTE FARAH
LONDON**
MAYOR OF LONDON
2021

COMMONWEALTH DAY STATEMENT

My name is Farah London. The next Mayor of London. Today is Commonwealth Day. I want to share with you my views of what the Commonwealth means for London and the bright future it offers us as we build on this positive legacy.

As a reminder - the Commonwealth group of nations, created in the early 1900s, is made up of 53 countries that were formerly part of the British Empire. It was created as a way of maintaining global unity through shared language, history, and culture as the British colonies began to seek independence. Around 2.3 billion people belong to the Commonwealth, representing one-third of the world population. Despite the massive geographic and demographic differences, these countries are united through their common values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Importantly, the nations who enter into the Commonwealth do so voluntarily and must embrace racial equality, liberty, human rights and free trade. This is an institution, which despite its travails, we can now all be proud of and which provided the foundation for the diversity, prosperity and vibrancy that has shaped the London we all love. One of the world's greatest multicultural cities.

2020, the year that marked the arrival of the pandemic, will also be remembered as the year the United Kingdom exited the European Union. While the jury is still out on what this means for our nation and our economy, the Commonwealth more than even has an important role to play.

My economic plan for London will make sure that we build on the historic cultural and economic ties we share with our Commonwealth partners. I will put in place a London Commonwealth business hub to drive commerce, secure capacity building investment and grow new and high value jobs.

BRING LONDON BACK

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Despite the size of the Commonwealth, it only represents less than 10% of the UK's total trade with the rest of the world. My plan will grow this number by acknowledging the important Commonwealth relationships that have been neglected for too long.

The Commonwealth includes India, the world's largest democracy and fifth largest economy, predicted to continue to grow strongly in the years ahead. We share a language, a system of government and law. Most importantly we have been united by history a shared culture and enriched by immigration. As a hot bed of innovation, Indian firms are the ideal partners for clever London businesses seeking to share expertise, expand and invest in future growth. Through my business hub I will foster and grow these relationships to realise the potential that needs to be set free.

Let's not forget countries like Australia and Canada. Wealthy and influential across the globe in important industries where the UK has so much capability. These linkages need to be raised to a new level of maturity. I will be providing incentives to businesses from these Commonwealth economies to establish and expand their presence in London, to partner with our clever organisations to conduct high value research and development and in so doing creating new jobs and opportunities right here in London.

So today I celebrate the Commonwealth. I reflect on its history, the struggles, the challenges and successes that have brought us to where we are today. I remind myself of how lucky we are to be part of a system that has become a byword for peace and stability. Today I also look forward to a strengthened Commonwealth, with London more than ever central to its bright future, sharing the benefits and reaping the rewards.

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