Press Release

Embargo until: Midnight 8 February 2015

Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth: 9 March 2015

'For the First Time In Maritime History, the 11 Ships of P&O and Cunard Line will be raising the Commonwealth flag at various locations as they cruise around the world at 10.00hrs on Monday 9th March 2015.'

This unique initiative, building on highly successful inaugural events last year, will see over 650 other Commonwealth Flags raised in 38 Commonwealth countries. It has caught the imagination of thousands of participants around the world, enabling people of all ages in their local communities to become involved and join with others worldwide in associating themselves with widespread public expression of commitment to the Commonwealth, appreciation of the values it stands for, and opportunities offered to its citizens.

Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageantmaster of 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth' said: 'I am delighted that P&O and Cunard Line are taking part in this way, and applaud their forward thinking and hope that those on board ship that morning enjoy this unique experience.'

For the first time, Cadets from the Royal Air Force Air Cadets will be participating in 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth' on 9th March 2015. Commonwealth Flags will be flown by Air Cadets in each of the six Regions of the Air Training Corps. There are close ties between Air Cadets in the UK and Cadets in other Commonwealth countries, and Cadets will be proud to celebrate the values of the Commonwealth on 9th March 2015.

A specially written Commonwealth Affirmation will be read out at each ceremony before the raising of the Commonwealth Flag at 10.00hrs that morning, led by the Leader, Chairman, Mayor or nominated representative of each participating local authority, town council, or administration.

Charity Teams from Fields of Life, a Northern Ireland and Uganda based charity will mark the day by taking the Commonwealth Flags to the top of the UK's four highest National Peaks and will use the occasion to raise valuable funds for their worthy
cause: Scafell Pike, England - Mount Snowdon, Wales - Ben Nevis, Scotland and Slieve Donard, Northern Ireland. The charity will also be raising the flag at Schools across Uganda that day.

Commonwealth Flags will also be flown at many locations of special significance that morning, which include, six flag raising ceremonies on the George Cross Island of Malta; the City of Wellington, New Zealand, Belize, Jamaica, Mauritius, Sri Lanka; Lowestoft, Suffolk, the easternmost town in England; Unst in the Shetland Islands, the most northerly inhabited Island in Scotland; the Rothera Research Station on the Antarctic Peninsula; and Tristan Da Cunha, the remotest inhabited Island in the world - to name but a few. Flags will also be raised at The Rye Lodge Hotel, the towns premier hotel, East Sussex, and the at the Cliff Hotel, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, as well as in other Commonwealth Countries involving Commonwealth Ex-Servicemen, along with Scouts and Girl Guides, bringing people of all ages together in common celebration of this great family of nations.

"In Tonga where time begins, the Girl Guides Association of the Kingdom of Tonga (GGAKT) are proud and delighted to be the first in the world to raise their Commonwealth flag at 10.00hrs on Monday 9th March 2015, leaving the youth of the Commonwealth in this unique, historic, global event that morning, are we are indeed very happy and look forward to the day, and are determined with the youth of Tonga to enjoy our involvement in support of the Commonwealth Charter, to which we owe a great deal", said Halaevalu Mangisi Palu, Chief Commissioner (GGAKT).

A Commonwealth Flag will also be raised at the Wroughton Junior School, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, the 'first' school in the United Kingdom to take part in this event. (The School erected a permanent flag pole in readiness for this occasion, and other schools will be encouraged to follow their lead for the event on Commonwealth Day 2016).

His Excellency Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth said:

"Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth is a most imaginative way for people in local communities - wherever they live, learn or work - to join together with others throughout the Commonwealth in a spirit of respect and understanding to celebrate the variety of unmatched diversity of our global family. I welcome and commend it."

"All our citizens, particularly the young, can express appreciation for the Commonwealth and the values it stands for, as set out in the Commonwealth
Charter, and the rich opportunities it offers for mutual support towards more inclusive social and more equitable economic progress."

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Further information and a full list of those taking part in 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth':

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