



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
OF CANADA

April 10th, 2018

Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada

Open Letter – Melissa Fairey, Canadian candidate for Vice Chairperson - Policy and Advocacy for the Commonwealth Youth Council

Melissa Fairey is a candidate for the role of Vice Chairperson – Policy and Advocacy for the 2018-20 Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC). Melissa has engaged extensively with international institutions, including the Commonwealth and the United Nations Development Programme. In this time, her focus has been on gender equality, youth engagement, and empowerment of women and marginalized communities.

Currently finishing her studies for a Masters of Public Policy and Development at the UN University in the Netherlands (anticipated completion and return to Canada, July 2018), Melissa is knowledgeable and energetic, especially about the Commonwealth. It is clear that Melissa is engaged with the projects she participates in and has the qualifications to assume the role. One of the most insightful comments into Melissa's character and vision was when she described her vision for enabling youth involvement:

"Lots of people who run for positions like these say they are representative of young people. I don't believe that, and I don't claim that. 'Youth' is so big, so diverse - even just in Canada. [This role] is about amplifying and creating opportunities for young people to have their voice heard in these spaces. It's not about representing and homogenizing youth issues and voices, but creating opportunities for young people to have self-representation."

More information about Melissa's principles and values, as well as the institutions with which she has engaged, can be found in her manifesto, available at <http://www.mi-event.info/event/cyc-elections2018>

The Commonwealth Youth Council is a body elected by the National Youth Delegates who attend the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) to be held in London, United Kingdom April 15-18 2018. CYC members sit for a period of two years, until the next CYF meets in conjunction with the Commonwealth Heads of Government summit. The CYC's establishment was supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat, and it now partners with the Commonwealth Secretariat and other organizations.

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) of Canada, a volunteer-run civil society organization, believes that this perspective on youth engagement will have great benefit to the Commonwealth at large, as well as at home in Canada. RCS Canada encourages Melissa to continue forward in her candidacy for the Commonwealth Youth Council and looks forward to developing stronger connections with her and Canadian Commonwealth youth networks in the near future.

