

# Press release: British High Commission hosts Commonwealth Big Lunch ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

HE Sarah Cooke in a selfie with school girls from Unubini and Tandale Primary Schools

The Big Lunch was the culmination of events in Tanzania ahead of the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in the London from 16th to 20th April 2018.

The Meeting will see up to 53 Commonwealth Heads of Government and representatives discuss key issues under the theme of “Towards a Common Future”.

Today’s Tanzania Commonwealth Big Lunch enabled young female students from the Msichana Initiative Girls Clubs in Unubini Primary School and Tandale Primary School in Dar es Salaam to receive mentorship and advice from some of the most successful and influential women in Tanzania.

The British High Commissioner, HE Sarah Cooke, stated

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting taking place in London next week will focus on delivering a fairer and more prosperous, secure and sustainable future for the Commonwealth. I am delighted to invite the young students from the Msichana Initiative Girls Clubs to today’s Big Lunch and connect them with inspirational mentors. One billion Commonwealth citizens are under the age of 25, so it is particularly important that the Commonwealth speaks to the challenges its young people face and answers their ambitions for a better life.

The lunch culminated with HE Sarah Cooke presenting the Commonwealth Point of Light Award to Petrider Paul, who was selected by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Petrider is a gender equality activist and was awarded for her exceptional voluntary service campaigning against child marriage and gender-based violence.

I am delighted to present Petrider with the Point of Light Award on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth commented HE Sarah Cooke. She is an inspiration not only to the young students here today but all young girls and women across Tanzania and the Commonwealth.

Also speaking at the event was Ms. Rebeca Gyumi, founder and Executive Director of Msichana Initiative who recently received the Human Rights Defender award from the UK Government, she said,

We will not consider ourselves successful until we have reached every girl. We do not want to leave anyone behind. I'm happy to see young girls sharing their dreams and aspirations with some of the most remarkable women in Tanzania, this should continue even in our individual spaces, that's how we build strong communities