

Commonwealth Day 2009 at Stormont Parliament

March 09, 2009

Belfast, Northern Ireland: Commonwealth Day 2009 was celebrated at Stormont Parliament, marking 60 years of the progressive Institution and the current thematic: "Serving a New Generation".

The ceremony was attended by Ministers, MLAs, Dignitaries, Foreign Commonwealth Nationals currently studying at Northern Ireland universities and invited guests from the fifty-three Commonwealth member states. The main speakers were: Mr William Hay MLA - Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr Danny Kennedy MLA – Chair of the Committee of The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (COFMDFM) and Mrs Patricia Lewsley - Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY).

Mr Hay explained to the packed audience in the Long Gallery that today is about celebrating the many people and communities from the Commonwealth, which now contribute and enrich our society. Our community is broader and more diverse than ever before and Northern Ireland is better because of these influences.

This year's message from Mr Kennedy focused on the Commonwealth's challenges and integration with different Institutions, including climate change, technology, conflict resolution, sustainability, development, international co-operation and governance.

The celebrations included a drum performance provided from the Youth group "A-Freek-A" and a banquet of food covering the diverse cultures and communities in Northern Ireland.

Dr Christopher Stange, Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and management member of the Afro-Community Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI) who attended the event added: "The Commonwealth is an important institution that has modernised itself internationally to engage the youth in global decision making and highlight their contribution to public life. After all the decisions we all make impacts the world, not only presently but for future generations. The Commonwealth promotes democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and the alleviation of poverty through social development and economic sustainability, all items which are paramount concerns of developing countries."



From L-R:
Patricia Lewsley - Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Christopher Stange – Hon. Consul of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) in Northern Ireland, William Hay MLA - Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr Danny Kennedy MLA Chair of the Committee of The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (COFMDFM) and members of the Caribbean and Pacific Diaspora attending universities in Northern Ireland

ENDS

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