



THE ROUND TABLE

The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs and Policy Studies

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FROM THE JOURNAL: ADJUSTING TO A NEW INTERNATIONAL AID REGIME

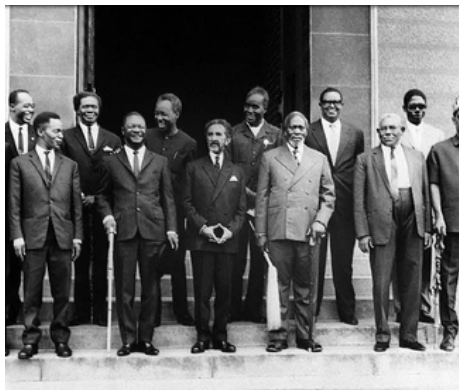
Western development assistance has been severely cut back in recent years – in the face of emergent economic, political, and security challenges, and a general retreat from multilateralism.

In his article, *'Stepping back and stepping up: adjusting to the new international aid regime'*, **Mark Simpson** examines the background to aid cuts, reactions of recipient countries, and actions taken in response to the new environment. He situates these changes in a longer historical context, and a re-evaluation of the importance of such aid both from donor Western governments and recipient Global South countries.

Development is also one of the themes of **Sarita Yadav, Nishtha Kaushiki, Victor Sathyadas, Jagmeet Bawa, and Ishmeet Singh's** *'From Development to Deterrence: The Strategic Reorientation of Japan's Foreign Assistance'* and **Habibul Haque Khondker and Mak Chanchal Khan's** *'Rethinking Development Beyond Postcolonial Discourses: A Commonsense-Critical Approach'*.



CURRENT ARTICLES ON AFRICA, SLAVERY, WILTON PARK AND THE SEABED



With a focus on Africa, **Stephen Adewale** examines the chequered history of *Africa and the Commonwealth, 1980–2025*, while **Oheneba Boateng** looks at *Mainstreaming Reparations in African Regionalism*. **Patricia Viseur Sellers** highlights the frightening *(Re)Emergence of the (Internal) Slave Trade* in parts of north Africa and the Middle East. **Anna Naupa** weighs up strategies to increase *women's representation to Vanuatu's parliament*, while **Philippa Louey** outlines some *Shared Seabed Stewardship Principles of Oceania*. Finally, **Nick Hopkinson** explores the interesting history of *Wilton Park and the Commonwealth*.



COMMONWEALTH OPINIONS: CARBON PRICING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

COP30 took place in Belém, Brazil, shortly after the country had granted a licence to Petrobras to drill for oil off the coast of Amapá, while neighbouring Guyana was ramping up its own oil production. Here **Thomas B. Singh** in *'From the Amazon to the Atlantic Coast'*, provides a Commonwealth perspective on COP30 and the region's oil dilemma. He argues for upstream carbon pricing (or a 'well-head' tax), rather than taxes at the point of consumption or emission. This would reframe the 'climate contribution' of developing countries from "sacrifice" – foregoing benefit – to one of fair, efficient, and sovereign participation.

Additionally, **Charles Ho Wang Mak** uses Hurricane Melissa to look at *Climate-Resilient Debt Clauses*.





How fares the Commonwealth in an unstable GLOBAL WORLD ? **David Jones** looks at [The Commonwealth Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#), **Ayushi Tiwari & Jitendra Dabral** focus on [Gulf goose-bumps and the impact on South Asia](#), while **Richard Bourne** asks [Can a summit in Antigua and Barbuda salvage the UN's role for peace?](#)

AFRICA also features in several opinions On Uganda **Barney Walsh** focuses on [Museveni and the 2026 Election](#); **Martin Plaut** examines [The plight of African migrants in South Africa](#); while **Innocent Kasiyano** studies the [Civilian Coup Bill and Political Re-engagement in Zimbabwe](#).

Finally, **Graham Kings** profiles [Sarah Mullaly](#), the new [Archbishop of Canterbury](#), in relation to Commonwealth affairs.

COMMONWEALTH BOOK SHELF

- **Derek McDougall** reviews [Search for Security: AUKUS and the New Militarism](#) (2025), edited by Mark Beeson, Kanishka Jayasuriya, and Sian Troath.
- **James Chin** reviews [Rethinking Ourselves: Justice, Reform and Ignorance in Postnormal Times](#) (2025), by Anwar Ibrahim,
- **Richard Bourne** reviews [Shine Your Eye – In Search of West Africa](#) (2026) by Adéwale Májà-Pearce,
- [Amid the Alien Corn: A Son's Memoir](#) (2025), by South African literary scholar Dennis Walder, gets a thumbs-up by **Terry Barringer**.



For a round-up of the latest Commonwealth-related books, see [Commonwealth Bookshelf](#) on the Round Table website.

HARRY HODSON PRIZE : WINNER PLUS THREE FINALISTS



Digital Sovereignty is the theme of this year's winning Harry Hodson prize for an essay on a Commonwealth-related theme by a university student aged under 30. The winner is **Beverley Saurombe**, a postgraduate student in computer science at the University of Johannesburg, with a research focus on human-AI collaboration. Her essay evaluates [South Africa's cybersecurity and data infrastructure](#).

Unusually, three of the finalists' essays were also deemed worthy of publication in the journal: **Gloria Charite** draws lessons from Rwanda's post-genocide health systems reconstruction for [tackling the crisis of neurological and mental health conditions](#). **Douglas Ching-yin Pea** calls for a Commonwealth response to transnational repression in [Democracy Under Distant Press](#). **Vansh Vyas** suggests using the legal cohesion of the Commonwealth in order to develop a 'Maritime Permanence Principle' for small island states, in [Sovereignty on the Waterline](#).

FROM THE WEBSITE : FROM COMMONWEALTH GAMES TO COCKROACHES



Glasgow hosted a highly successful if highly truncated 23rd gathering for the Commonwealth Games, just ended on August 2nd, the city having stepped in after the state government of Victoria in Australia pulled out. Here sports journalist and historian, **Philip Barker**, reviews the history of the *'friendly games'* from their inauguration in 1930,

highlighting controversies over apartheid, the embracing of indigenous culture, and gender equity. Notably, the winner of the women's 200m individual medley in 2002 at Manchester Games was Zimbabwean swimmer Kirsty Coventry, now powerful as President of the International Olympic Committee.



Other items covered include the sudden explosion of the Cockroach Janta movement in India, by **K.S. Dakshina Murthy**; whilst **Owen Tudor** looks at the annual ILO Global Rights Index and finds that, for the second year running, and against the global trend,, workers' rights in Commonwealth countries have improved.

FROM THE ARCHIVE – 90 YEARS AGO: 'PROHIBITION IN THE USA'



A hundred years ago America was still in the grip of prohibition. In this article **Whitney Shepardson**, a key figure in the US Council on Foreign Relations, analysed the impact of prohibition, including the large rise in crime and in alcohol-related illness, and the loss of government revenue, concluding (by quoting Abraham Lincoln) that prohibition was 'a species of intemperance within itself'. The American electorate agreed, and in 1933 prohibition came to an end with the ratification of the twenty-first amendment.

FORTHCOMING EVENT: PATSY ROBERTSON LECTURE



The sixth annual Patsy Robertson Lecture will take place in London on Tuesday 27 October 2026. The speaker will be **Alok Sharma**, Lord Sharma, the British Conservative politician who was President of COP26, held in Glasgow in 2021. With the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting scheduled for November 1-4 and COP31 for November 9-20, Lord Sharma is expected to address the climate crisis, the need for action, and the role of the Commonwealth.



The lecture is named after **Patsy Robertson** (1933-2020, right), the Jamaican journalist who was official spokesperson for the Commonwealth from 1983 to 1994, and a great friend of the RT journal.

SOCIAL MEDIA



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