A round-up!

Leaders of the Commonwealth countries meet every two years at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) took place on 20-25 June, 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda. The week-long programme of high-level side events, ministers’ meetings and forums – the Commonwealth Youth Forum, the Commonwealth Women’s Forum, the Commonwealth Business Forum, and the Commonwealth People’s Forum – were held in the lead-up to CHOGM. Over 50 heads of government gathered in Kigali, joined by business, philanthropy and civil society leaders including Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.

Side events took place before and during the week of CHOGM 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda. Organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the host country Rwanda, and other external organisations, these events supplemented and bolstered the CHOGM programme and reflected member countries’ shared ambitions. Delegates embraced unity and collaboration to tackle issues that are at the heart of the Commonwealth’s values, such as gender equality, youth empowerment, sustainable economic development and climate action.
On the last day of CHOGM, government leaders underscored the importance of working together to improve the lives of all Commonwealth citizens. Livestream links, photos and event recordings are available for download on Flickr and Youtube.

**Thursday 16 June, 2022**

- The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) Biennial Meeting | 16-17 June 2022

56 Commonwealth national human rights institutions and ombudsman offices attended the CFNHRI biennial meeting under the theme “Human Rights for All at the Heart of Recovery Efforts During and After COVID-19.” Building on the progress of the 2018 biennial meeting in London, National Human Rights Institutions discussed ways in which Commonwealth member countries can use a human rights approach when adopting and implementing COVID-19 measures and recovery efforts, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Day 1 | Sunday June 19, 2022**

- The Commonwealth Youth Forum | 19-21 June 2022
More than 350 youth leaders from 54 nations of the Commonwealth gathered at the Intare Conference Arena for the opening of the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF). Held ahead of the main CHOGM under the theme: “Taking Charge of our Future”, the three-day forum was a unique opportunity for young leaders to bring policy recommendations to their governments - asserting their role in shaping the future of the Commonwealth. They also came together to issue a call to action to their peers, imploring them to maximise their potential to address the challenges they face, and to build a better future. The Commonwealth Youth Forum came up with a six-point action plan (The Youth Declaration) which marked the installation of the new Commonwealth Youth Council executives who will act as a recognised voice for the 1.2 billion under-30s living in the Commonwealth. This was the 12th Commonwealth Youth Forum, following the last one held in the United Kingdom in 2018.

Day 2 | Monday June 20, 2022

- The Commonwealth Women's Forum | 20-21 June 2022

Rwanda hosted the Commonwealth Women’s Forum (CWF) convening more than 500 delegates from the Commonwealth member states in the presence of H.E. Jeannette Kagame, First Lady of Rwanda, and The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Commonwealth Secretary-General. This was the first Women’s Forum that took place on the African Continent in the context of CHOGM. Held at Kigali Serena Hotel, from Monday 20-21 June 2022 under the theme: “Delivering a Common Future: Transforming for Gender Equality”, the forum addressed women in leadership, women’s economic empowerment and engaging men and boys, as well as different generations, in ending violence against women and girls. The forum also proposed solutions that were based on by Commonwealth leaders in making discussions on ending gender inequality as well as solutions to address pressing challenges affecting women and girls across the Commonwealth. Also at CWF, the Economic Cost of Violence Against Women and Girls Guidelines, which utilises a new framework to determine the cost of violence for various sectors in the economy and state, was launched.
Day 3 | Tuesday June 21, 2022

- The Commonwealth Business Forum | 21-23 June, 2022

The Commonwealth Business Forum - the first and largest in-person gathering for governments and businesses across the Commonwealth since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic – brought together over 1,500 delegates from Commonwealth member states. Held under the theme, “Delivering a Common Future: Our Health, Our Planet, Our Future”, the three-day Forum engaged in impactful and pertinent conversations on trade and regional integration, innovation and the digital economy, sustainability, financing growth, global health equity, and the future of work. The Commonwealth Business Forum was hosted by the Government of Rwanda in partnership with the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council. The Commonwealth Business Forum was held in parallel with three other forums, including the Commonwealth Youth Forum, which entered its final day, the Commonwealth Women’s Forum, and the Commonwealth People’s Forum.

**Side event:** Blue Charter Action Groups Tackling Ocean and Climate Change to showcase a sampling of Action Groups’ efforts to date and will encourage discussion on future ocean-climate strategies and initiatives.

- The Commonwealth People’s Forum | 21-22 June, 2022
The Commonwealth People’s Forum brought together civil society representatives from around the Commonwealth to examine fundamental challenges plaguing Commonwealth citizens. The forum held panel discussions on Innovations in participatory governance, Advancing Freedom of Expression in the Commonwealth, and a Commonwealth for all.

**Side events:** 1. **Access to Justice and Technology** to discuss some innovative technology solutions that vastly improve access to justice, 2. **Sustainable Urbanisation** focusing on approaches to ensure citizens are at the heart of making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.; and the 3. **Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Groups**.

**Day 4 | Wednesday June 22, 2022**

- President Kagame received their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall
- Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group Meeting and Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Small States
- High-level side events including on Climate Change, Countering Violent Extremism and Rethinking Mental Health

The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall met with the President and First Lady of Rwanda, H.E. Paul Kagame and H.E. Jeannette Kagame, at Urugwiro Village, and later visited the Nyamata Church Genocide Memorial, Mbyo Reconciliation Village and Albertine Rift Conservation Society (A.R.C.O.S.) agroforestry site in Bugesera District. Ahead of their meeting with
the President and First Lady, they had visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial, where they received a tour of the Memorial’s exhibits.

On the sidelines of the Commonwealth Business Forum and the Commonwealth People’s Forum, several events were held including a Breakfast Meeting on “Climate Change and the Commonwealth: Accelerating Action” attended by policy makers and key players to discuss the steps to enhance joint actions on climate change and responding to dangers including land degradation and biodiversity loss. Also the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on small states brought together foreign affairs ministers from thirty-two of the world’s 42 small states are Commonwealth members. The meeting served as a platform to identify practical ways the Commonwealth can contribute to a strengthened global response to the challenges they face. Meanwhile, at the Countering Violent Extremism event, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched a manual for managing and supporting the proactive reintegration of violent extremists returning from conflicts, and their families, whilst keeping communities safe and stopping the spread of terrorist ideals.

**Side events:** 1. Climate Change and the Commonwealth: Accelerating Action to showcase the steps that climate-vulnerable member states are taking in response to climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss, and brief CHOGM members and related stakeholders on key priorities. 2. Countering Violent Extremism event discussed challenges, and share best practices on approaches to managing terrorism and preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalise and join violent extremist groups. 3. Rethinking Mental Health echoed the Commonwealth’s principle of promoting access to affordable health care and removing wide disparities and unequal living standards.

**Day 5 | Thursday June 23, 2022**

- Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases

![Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases](image)

Commonwealth leaders and some of the most influential voices in global health, including world leaders, leading WHO figures, philanthropists, scientific experts, global influencers and community champions, gathered at the Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) where more than $4 billion in new funds was pledged towards the fight against malaria and NTDs. This was an act to renew their commitment and agree on actions to end malaria and NTDs.

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall joined the Commonwealth Secretariat and The NO MORE Foundation launched new guidelines to help reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG) urging more consistent and effective collaboration between governments, civil society and the private sector in the 54 Commonwealth member countries.
Commonwealth foreign ministers met face-to-face for the first time in almost three years, ahead of the CHOGM. The meeting has allowed ministers the opportunity to hold formal discussions on the CHOGM theme, Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming, focusing on post-COVID recovery sustainable development. The Commonwealth leaders also met to discuss the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Sports Breakfast

Commonwealth Sports and Health Ministers, sports industry professionals and stakeholders from bodies like UNESCO, the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS), the Olympic movement and FIFA came together for a roundtable breakfast where they heard about how the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, UK, will help to produce better health and development outcomes globally.
● Unity Club Breakfast Meeting

On 23 June 2022, The First Lady Mrs. Jeannette Kagame, fellow First Ladies and the Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland joined a breakfast hosted by Unity Club during which guests learned about Rwanda's Journey in unity and reconciliation.

● A Visit to Kigali Public Library

The First Lady Mrs Jeannette Kagame and His Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall visited and interacted with children at the Kigali Public Library.

Other Side events: 1. Antimicrobial Resistance Event advocated for political action needed for the mitigation of drug-resistant infections through responsible and sustainable access to and use of antimicrobials. 2. The Glasgow Climate Pact and Building Momentum towards COP27 took stock of COP26 outcomes and discussed innovative ways to access climate finance.
Day 6 | Friday June 24, 2022

- CHOGM Opening Ceremony
- Executive sessions

June 24, 2022 marked the official opening of the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), and the end of five days of Commonwealth forums on youth, women, business and civil society, high profile side events and preparatory ministerial meetings which have seen more than 5,000 delegates from more than 50 Commonwealth nations gather to discuss some of the most important issues that face the Commonwealth. Presidents, prime ministers and their representatives from across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific and Europe assembled in person at the Kigali Conference Centre for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally and delayed the meeting for two years. It is also the first CHOGM to be held on the African continent since Uganda in 2007. The meeting heard remarks from HRH The Prince of Wales, the new Chair-In-Office and President of Rwanda, H.E. Paul Kagame, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, and outgoing Chair-In-Office, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP.

- Welcome Lunch to Discuss Cervical Cancer Elimination

Meanwhile, cancer survivors were given the unique opportunity to share their journeys with spouses and partners of Commonwealth Heads of Governments and Foreign Ministers at a special luncheon on cervical cancer elimination, hosted by Rwanda’s First Lady, H.E. Jeannette Kagame, and husband of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Richard Mawhinney.
Day 7 | Saturday June 25, 2022

- Retreat for Heads of Government and Closing Executive Session

On the final day of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2022 (CHOGM 2022), leaders underscored the importance of connecting, innovating, and transforming in order to facilitate a full recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, achieve the 2030 Agenda, and respond to conflicts and crises in ways that increase resilience and progress in delivering a common future, underpinned by sustainability, peace and prosperity, to improve the lives of all the people of the Commonwealth. Heads and their representatives also met in executive sessions and a leaders’ retreat to discuss shared priorities that will shape the work programmes of the organisation. The outcomes of deliberations have been captured in the final communiqué and the leaders’ statement. One of the major announcements out of Day 7’s meeting was the admission of Gabon and Togo as the Commonwealth’s 55th and 56th members, respectively. Neither country has a historic association with the Commonwealth, with both gaining independence from France in the 1960s.

- Intergenerational dialogue

The historic intergenerational dialogue saw young leaders sitting in a circle with presidents, prime ministers, ministers, and heads of delegation from 15 countries, including Rwanda, Canada, Seychelles, and Samoa, for crucial conversations on youth-led sustainable development.
Samoa will be the host of the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2024.

- **Art Exhibition and a Coffee Masterclass**

  The First Lady Mrs. Jeannette Kagame hosted First Ladies and Spouses for a uniquely Rwandan showcase: an art exhibition from some of Rwanda’s best artists, and a Coffee Masterclass by Question Café.

- **An Exchange on Girls Education by Imbuto Foundation**

  Later on, the First Lady Mrs. Jeannette Kagame was joined by First Ladies and Spouses, to exchange and engage, at the ‘Girls’ Education by Imbuto Foundation’.
● First Ladies Farewell Lunch

First Lady Mrs Jeannette Kagame hosted her counterparts from the Commonwealth for a farewell lunch at Urugwiro Village, marking the end of #CHOGM2022 Spouses’ activities.

Other Side events: 1. The Commonwealth Blue Charter and the Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition discussed the Action Group model so far, the importance of partnerships, progress, lessons learned along the way, and reflect on what more needs to be done to accelerate ambition into action.
Social Events | Saturday 20-25 June 2022

- People’s Concerts | 24 & 26 June 2022

Aside from the discussions and conferences of CHOGM, a list of fun and exciting activities were planned for delegates and locals to enjoy. Kigali People’s Festival was the first social event for CHOGM delegates and other people including the locals, to mingle and enjoy Kigali’s street food and different board games. Wrapping up Kigali People Concert, a week long performance at Kisimenti and Biryogo car free zones which kept Kigali lit through CHOGM, on Friday evening, the artistes took music lovers to Rugende and Nyamirambo stadium commonly known as Tapi rouge.

- Kigali People's and Street Festivals | 20-25 June 2022

The Kigali People’s Festival event was geared towards bringing people together with a taste for diverse cultures through music, comedy and spontaneous entertainment by artistes from Africa and beyond. It was held at the car-free zones of Gisementi-Remera on June 20, and later at Nyamirambo-Biryogo. This festival was the curtain raiser for the CHOGM social events. Organised by Kigali Farmers’ and Artisans’ Market, Ikaze PCO, and Intore Entertainment, the event showcased Rwandan and other African art, culture, and the business around it. Both foreign visitors and Rwandans enjoyed and interacted. The venue was Kigali’s newly renovated Imbuga City Walk. The event also featured a display of Africa-inspired...
fashion by local designers; handicrafts by Rwandan artisans, and there were a children’s play area during the day. Also there were live band and creative performances, and lots of food and drinks.

- **Kigali Night Run | 21 June 2022**

Now emerging as a prominent Rwandan social activity, the event has over the years attracted the young and old for a fun run around designated roads and spaces in the city. This event was held from 7pm to 9pm on June 21, and consisted of a five-kilometre run — to incorporate the city’s healthy living into the CHOGM agenda and also for visitors and the general public to enjoy stress-free exercise.

- **Cricket Tournament | 23 June 2022**
Cricket fans were hosted at the Gahanga Cricket Stadium where the CHOGM Cricket Tournament took place alongside the high-profile networking ambience that this event provided. It was also a chance for Rwanda to position and exhibit its dedication to the growth of all sports in the country.

- **Networking Golf Tournament | 24 June 2022**

This was a highly anticipated event that took place at the newly launched Kigali Golf Resort and Villas, and brought delegates together in a relaxed atmosphere. The tournament was also an ideal platform for those in corporate circles from all countries attending CHOGM to rub shoulders.

- **ChopLife Concert | 25 June 2022**

After a busy week with forums, deliberations, MoUs signing, among other activities, the entertainment industry gave its unique touch to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Chop Life brought one of Africa finest DJ Neptunz, Nigerian hit maker, singer and songwriter Tekno Miles, South African rapper and record producer Nasty C and rapper Khaligraph Jones all the way from Kenya. They were joined by local hitmakers Bruce Melodie, upcoming artiste
Okkama, Kinya Trap Bushari joined by Juno Kizigenza, Arriel Wayz and Kenny Sol. DJ Ira and DJ Toxxyk also made it. A massive crowd made it to this concert from ten thousands people capacity, BK Arena.

- **Rwanda - Commonwealth Fashion Week | 21 & 26 June 2022**

As part of the 26th CHOGOM, the Kigali Fashion Week attracted 23 local designers and international brands as well as models from across the globe. Prince Charles of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall attended the event, which also featured nine international brands from the UK, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Jamaica and South Africa. Rwanda - Commonwealth Fashion week showcased local and Commonwealth fashion, accessories and interior designers. A list of of activities were organised throughout the week including a panel on sustainable fashion in the Commonwealth at the Commonwealth Business Forum, a fashion night out, the launch of a common marketplace and digital exhibition, designers, shop tours, and visits to artisans. Rwandan and Commonwealth designers had the opportunity to learn from each other, co-create, network and build synergies for future collaboration.

**Media Review | Mainstream and Social media Review**

- **Tweets**

  **@PaulKagame**: Congratulations to all the organisers, the security forces who kept everyone safe, the staff across all venues and all Rwandans who contributed to the success of #CHOGM2022! Thank you immensely for doing the country proud!

  **@PaulKagame**: Thank you to all 4,000 participants who joined us for #CHOGM2022. To my fellow leaders, it was an honor to host you all in Rwanda to reaffirm our united resolve to deliver a prosperous,dignified future for the citizens of the Commonwealth family. We wish you all a safe trip home!

  **@HHichilema**: Murakoze Rwanda! It was an honour for us to be here and interact with other leaders from the Commonwealth family. Congratulations my brother, President @PaulKagame, #Rwanda hosted a successful @CHOGM2022.

  **@MrsHichilema**: It has been a wonderful visit to the Land of a Thousand Hills, #Rwanda. Inspired by so much of what we’ve seen here. Our compliments to President @PaulKagame, H.E @FirstLadyRwanda and the people of Rwanda for their warm hospitality. Merci Beaucoup! @CHOGM2022

  **@FirstLadyNam**: Rwanda was the perfect host for a successful #CHOGM2022. It also provided the perfect opportunity to meet with a few stakeholders and chart a meaningful path forward for @OAFLAD
@BorisJohnson: The Commonwealth, a family of 54 countries encompassing a third of humanity is united by an invisible thread of shared values, history and friendship. We now pass the responsibility of Chair-in-Office to Rwanda to continue the work of the Commonwealth.

@BorisJohnson: Good to meet President @PaulKagame in the beautiful city of Kigali this morning. As we hand over the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office to Rwanda, our countries will be working together closely to address the most pressing global challenges.

@TamimBinHamad: I thank my friend, His Excellency the President @PaulKagame for the invitation to participate in the meeting @CHOGM2022, in which I had the pleasure of meeting the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth and exchanging with a number of them their views on future issues of concern to our countries, wishing all participants success.

@JustinTrudeau: This week, Commonwealth leaders have gathered in Rwanda to speak about the crises the world is facing – and I sat down with President @PaulKagame to discuss them, too. We spoke about working together to improve food and energy security, take ambitious climate action, tackle the rising cost of living, and create good jobs and new opportunities. We also focused on defending democracy, promoting human rights, and building a better future.

@HonPhilipEDavis: I want to thank @PaulKagame and the people of Rwanda for hosting a very successful @CHOGM2022. I look forward to our collective efforts under the leadership of @PScotlandCSG in turning our words and commitments into action on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth.

@PScotlandCSG: As #CHOGM2022 concludes I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to H.E. President @PaulKagame, Govt and People of #Rwanda, the @commonwealthsec team and to all our #Commonwealth family, for the outstanding commitment which made this #CHOGM so successful! God bless you all.

@UN_PGA: Murakoze Cyane! Had a productive visit to Kigali. Was honoured to participate in #CHOGM2022 meetings and engage with Rwandan government officials, and civil society representatives. Thank you #Rwanda for a memorable visit.

@HinaKhar: As Pakistan’s delegation leaves Rwanda after many useful bilateral mtgs and many sessions on #CHOGM agenda, the most remarkable take away was to see how a healing leadership can transform a nation @PaulKagame you’ve served your country well. Thank you for the inspiration.

@MaimunahSharif: It is my great pleasure to join you at the Commonwealth Business Forum hosted by Rwanda. It is the first #CHOGM in Africa since 2007. The world is facing a complex set of challenges. I call it the 5Cs: we are at the confluence of Covid-19, Conflict, Climate and Capital Crises!

@lizgulaz: Reflections on my trip to #Rwanda were my colleagues and I attended a side event of #CHOGM2022. We arrived at Kigali International airport & my colleague’s bags were neatly wrapped with plastic, on our way out the security could not let her out, Security asked her to remove plastics on her bag & they did this in a very polite manner. They even asked some males part of our team to stay with her behind and help her remove the #plastics in line with their policies which do not allow #plastics. Now at the hotel we stayed Their water was in these nicely packaged glass bottle and we were encouraged not to throw the bottles in the bin but to leave them on the tables for they were going be picked up for #recycling. So many times I have advocated for sustainability in the hotel industry. We visited the vegetable market, one of the cleanest vegetable markets. We bought some fruits & vegetables which they packaged in #paperbags, plastic bags do not exist in #Rwanda if they do I never saw one. We also bought some food in a shop, which was packaged in a paper bag We were not staying in #Kigali but in #Nyamata which is in the Eastern Province, 32.7km from the capital, total population of approx 34,9k. The level of cleanliness in this town is shocking, we have some notes to take from #Rwanda, it’s the small steps that make a difference.
• Articles

International

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3. Charles: Ditch the monarchy if you like (Daily Mail) Read more
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5. Charles tells Commonwealth it’s fine to ditch monarchy and become a republic (ITV News) Read more
6. Prince Charles nods at republican sentiment in Commonwealth speech (Reuters) Read more
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8. Prince Charles tells Commonwealth of sorrow over slavery (BBC News) Read more
9. Prince Charles expresses ‘personal sorrow’ over slavery’s ‘enduring impact’ at Commonwealth meeting in Rwanda (Sky News) Read more
10. Prince Charles and Camilla host leaders for Commonwealth dinner in Rwanda (The Telegraph) Read more
11. Commonwealth Countries Meet to Cement Relations (VOA News) Read more
12. Prince Charles shares sorrow at suffering slavery caused (CNN) Read more
13. Climate, malaria highlighted as Commonwealth leaders meet (Associated Press) Read more
14. Commonwealth heads call for climate action at Rwanda meeting (Associated Press) Read more
15. Camilla calls for “solutions” to tackle domestic violence during Rwanda visit (The Crown Chronicles) Read more
16. The Commonwealth in the 21st century: Beyond rhetoric (The Guardian) Read more
17. Rwandan President Kagame Emerges Commonwealth Chair-In-Office (The Will) Read more
18. Commonwealth leaders wrap up summit in Rwanda (China Daily) Read more
19. West African nations Gabon and Togo join Commonwealth (France 24) Read more
20. Kagame yavuze ko u Rwanda nta somo rukenye ry’indangagaciro (BBC Gahuza) Read more

Regional

1. Patricia Scotland retains Commonwealth Secretary-General seat in rare contest (The East African) Read more
2. Chogm in Kigali: Colonies’ triumph over the British empire (The East African) Read more
3. CHOGM: Commonwealth leaders’ meeting starts in Kigali (The Independent) Read more
4. Prince Charles says Commonwealth nations free to chart own course (NTV Uganda) Read more

Local

1. President Kagame’s Full Speech At The Official Opening Of CHOGM 2022 (KT Press) Read more
2. CHOGM, Addressing Global Challenges, Not Just Those Of The Commonwealth (KT Press) Read more
3. CHOGM 22 Opens With Urgent Call To Tackle Global Challenges (KT Press) Read more
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5. CHOGM 2022: Commonwealth Has To Be Common To All Nations, Not Just A Few – President Kagame (KT Press) Read more
7. CHOGM 2022: Youth Forum Kicks Off With A Call To Empower Young People To Take The Lead (KT Press) Read more
8. CHOGM 2022: President Kagame, PM Boris Johnson Hold Talks On UK-Rwanda Partnerships (KT Press) Read more
9. Mind, Body And Soul, Kigali CHOGM Feeding Them All (KT Press) Read more
10. An Epic Farewell To CHOGM (KT Press) Read more
11. VIDEO: CHOGM officially opens (The new Times) Read more
12. CHOGM is here: let's embrace it (The New Times) Read more
13. CHOGM: Global action needed to strengthen small states in Commonwealth (The New Times) Read more
15. The fun side of CHOGM (The New Times) Read more
16. This is how ordinary local citizens can draw long-term benefits from CHOGM (The New Times) Read more
17. Commonwealth rights forum members adopt Kigali declaration (The New Times) Read more
18. CHOGM: Delegates share takeaways from Commonwealth Youth Forum (The New Times) Read more
19. Move from victims of conflict to defenders of peace, First Lady urges women (The New Times) Read more
20. CHOGM: Youth underscore innovation for collective sustainability (The New Times) Read more
21. First Lady wants women to assume role of defenders of peace (The New Times) Read more
22. CHOGM: Report hails Rwanda’s move to reduce single-use plastics (The New Times) Read more
23. Commonwealth must leave no one behind – Kagame (The New Times) Read more
24. No Commonwealth without mental health - First Lady (The New Times) Read more
25. Key investment opportunities Rwanda is showcasing at the Commonwealth Business Forum (The New Times) Read more
27. CHOGM: Designers discuss sustainable fashion in face of second-hand clothes (The New Times) Read more
28. IN PICTURES: Kagame hosts state dinner for Commonwealth leaders (The New Times) Read more
29. Kagame: Commonwealth should be on the frontlines of global challenges (The New Times) Read more
30. Kagame, Prince Charles reflect on Rwanda's past and present (The New Times) Read more
31. Kagame to push for measurable results as head of Commonwealth (The New Times) Read more
32. CHOGM: First Ladies' best moments through the lenses (The New Times) Read more
33. Here are six deals Rwanda concluded during CHOGM (The New Times) Read more
34. Kigali CHOGM Pushes For Implementation Of Living-Lands Charter (Taarifa) Read more
35. Rwanda Youth Smile At Their First CHOGM (Taarifa) Read more
36. Rwanda Speaker Of Parliament Opens CHOGM People's Forum (Taarifa) Read more
37. Kagame Flags Off Ambitious Kigali Financial Towers (Taarifa) Read more
38. CHOGM22 Business Forum Seeks To Reduce Trade Barriers (Taarifa) Read more
39. Perezida Kagame yatangiye kuyobora Commonwealth; Scotland yongererwa manda nk’Umunyamabanga Mukuru (Igihe) Read more
40. Abitabiriye CHOGM banyuzwe n’umukino wa Cricket wabereye i Gahanga (Igihe) Read more
41. Igikomangoma Charles yagaragaje ko urugamba rwo guhashya malaria atari urwa bamwe (Igihe) Read more
42. AMAFOTO: Perezida Kagame na bagenzi be bakiriwe ku meza n’Igikomangoma Charles (Igihe) Read more
43. CHOGM: Hasabwe imbaraga mu guteza imbere ihangwa ry’imishinga itangiza ibidukikije (Igihe) Read more
44. U Rwanda rwatorewe kuyobora Ihuriro rya Komisiyo z’Uburenganzira bwa Muntu muri Commonwealth (Igihe) Read more
45. Togo na Gabon byemejwe nk’abanyamuryango bashya ba Commonwealth (Igihe) Read more
46. #CHOGM2022: Barebeye hamwe uko bahangana n’ikindi cyorezo gishobora kwaduka (Kigali Today) Read more
47. Turi igihugu cyashenywe na Jenoside, ariko ubu cyarahindutse mu mutima, mu bwenge no ku mubiri - Perezida Kagame (Kigali Today) Read more
48. Boris Johnson yifurije ishya n’ihirwe Perezida Kagame ugiye kuyobora Commonwealth (Kigali today) Read more
49. #CHOGM2022: Ba Minisitiri b’Ububanyi n’amahanga baganiriye ku guhangana n’ingaruka za Covid-19 (Kigali Today) Read more
50. Ibibazo ntibihora ari iby’urubiyiruko gusa, n’abakuze hari bimwe duhuriraho - Perezida Kagame (Kigali Today) Read more

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  4. The Commonwealth Secretariat highlights: Watch here
  5. The Highlight video of the CHOGM2022 Spouses and Partners Programme and Side Events: Watch here