

First Sri Lankan To Be Elected - Deputy-Chairman Of The Royal CommonwealthSociety Headquarters In London, UK



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(L-R): Dr Chris Nonis, Deputy Chairman – Royal Commonwealth Society, Sir David Green KCMG, Chairman – Royal Commonwealth Society, Baroness Prashar – President Royal Commonwealth Society, Secretary General of the Commonwealth HE Kamalesh Sharma and Stuart Mole OBE, Director General of the Royal Commonwealth Society

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Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Patron of the Royal Commonwealth Society and Head of the Commonwealth, with Dr Chris Nonis

Dr Chris Nonis, Trustee and Council Member of the Royal Commonwealth Society Headquarters in London, which oversees the work of the Royal Commonwealth Society in 53 Commonwealth countries, was elected as its Deputy-Chairman in 2008. Dr Nonis has the distinction of being the first Sri Lankan in the 140-year history of the Royal Commonwealth Society, London, to be elected to this pivotal international role.

Founded in 1868, the Royal Commonwealth Society continues to be a forum for debate, advocacy, and promotion of shared Commonwealth values and principles. It remains a strong protagonist for change within the Commonwealth. The Society also provides an important forum for Heads of Government, Ministers, Diplomats, and Academics, to speak on compelling Commonwealth imperatives. As one of the foremost Commonwealth Institutions, the Royal Commonwealth Society has hosted over 40 Heads of Government, including Lee Kuan Yew, Mahathir Mohammed, and notably Nelson Mandela gave his first press conference at the Royal Commonwealth Society following the end of the apartheid era in South Africa.

Dr Chris Nonis is the Chairman of the Mackwoods Group of Companies, having succeeded his mother, the late Mrs Sriyani Nonis, in July 2005. Mackwoods, established in 1841, is the second oldest mercantile establishment in Sri Lanka, and is today a conglomerate of several companies engaged in key sectors of the Sri Lankan economy, namely Healthcare (Pharmaceuticals, Medical Equipment, Scientific & Lab Equipment); Agribusiness and Plantations (Tea, Rubber and Oil Palm); ICT Education and Software Development; Imports and Exports; Industrial Machinery and Equipment; Industrial Chemicals; Energy Sector; Leisure Sector; and Manufacturing Sector, providing employment to nearly 9500 individuals, and managing a land base of over 27,000 acres.

Dr Nonis qualified in London, with a First Class Honours Bachelor of Science degree from Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine; obtained his MBBS from the Royal Free Hospital Medical School, University of London, having completed his electives at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA. Dr Nonis carried out his postgraduate training at Royal Brompton, the Hammersmith, and Addenbrooke’s Hospital, Cambridge and obtained his Membership of the Royal College of Physicians, MRCP. (UK).

Dr Nonis is a Director of the National Enterprise Development Authority (NEDA) and serves on the Grants Board of the ICT Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA). Furthermore he holds numerous positions including serving the National Advisory Council for Export Development of the EDB (NACFED); Vice Chairman of the Services Group of the

Employers' Federation of Ceylon; the Advisory Committee on Peace & Reconciliation of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce; the Country Coordinating Mechanism for Sri Lanka of the Global Fund; Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Spices & Allied Products of the Sri Lanka Export Development Board; and President of the India Life Sciences Institute – Sri Lanka Committee. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, London and has been an advisor to the World Health Organization, Geneva.

Stuart Mole, OBE, Director-General of the Royal Commonwealth Society, commented: "I am delighted that Chris Nonis has accepted this role, which spans the rich tapestry of the Commonwealth Nations. Chris brings his wealth of experience working with the Royal Commonwealth Society, London and indeed pan-Commonwealth, as well as his in-depth knowledge of international affairs, to this position, and we are fortunate to have someone of his calibre as Deputy-Chairman of the Society".