

CSC Connect and Collaborate Event 2026

Development theme discussion panels

Topics and speakers

Times: 11:45-13:15

Rooms: Churchill, Gielgud, Burton & Redgrave, Albert, Olivier, Victoria

Science and technology for development

Topic	AI for development
Question	How can bias in AI systems be addressed to ensure equitable outcomes?
Room	Churchill
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Parmjit Jat (Chair), CSC Commissioner and Professor of Molecular Cell Biology, University College London • Dr Kutoma Wakunuma, Associate Professor of Research and Teaching in Information Systems, De Montfort University • Professor Emile R Chimusa, Computational Population Genomics and Bioinformatics Researcher, Northumbria University • Aisha Noor, Commonwealth PhD Scholar, University College London

Improving population health, health systems and capacity

Topic	Mental health and wellbeing in development contexts
Question	How can mental health be integrated into the sustainable development goals?
Room	Gielgud
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Allan Hill (Chair), CSC Commissioner and Professor of Population and International Health Emeritus, University of Southampton • Professor Melanie Amna Abas, Professor of Global Mental Health, King's College London • Professor Sir Graham Thornicroft, Emeritus Professor of Community Psychiatry, King's College London • Muniba Khaliq, Commonwealth PhD Scholar, University of Reading

Strengthening peace, security and governance

Topic	Inclusive governance and civic participation
Question	How can marginalised voices be meaningfully included in public decision-making?
Room	Burton & Redgrave
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Shorthouse (Chair), CSC Commissioner and Founder and Executive Chair, Bright Blue • Professor Graham Smith, Professor of Politics, University of Westminster

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Twigg, Secretary General, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association • Hamid Abdalla Hamid, Commonwealth PhD Scholar, Coventry University
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Strengthening resilience and response to crises

Topic	Food security and climate resilience
Question	What roles do indigenous/local practices play in building climate resilience?
Room	Albert
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Liz Baggs (Chair), CSC Commissioner and Professor of Food and Environmental Security, The University of Edinburgh • Dr Sonja Vermeulen, Associate Fellow, Sustainability Accelerator, Environment and Society Centre, Chatham House • Dr Helen Onyeaka, Associate Professor, University of Birmingham • Femi Adekoya, Commonwealth PhD Scholar, Harper Adams University

Access, inclusion, and opportunity

Topic	Gender equity in development
Question	How can policies be designed for (overall) equity and inclusion?
Room	Olivier
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanya Masiyiwa (Chair), CSC Commissioner and President and CEO of Delta Philanthropies, Higherlife Foundation and Akello • Professor Tristan McCowan, Professor of International Education, University College London • Professor Graeme Atherton, Head of the Centre for Inequality and Levelling up, University of West London • Christine Olando, Commonwealth PhD Scholar, University of Warwick

Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship

Topic	Social entrepreneurship for inclusive growth
Question	What enablers help scale impact-driven ventures under the topic of Social Entrepreneurship for Inclusive Growth?
Room	Victoria
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Kevin Ibeh (Chair), CSC Commissioner and Professor of Marketing and International Business, Birkbeck, University of London • Dr Abiodun Egbetokun, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, De Montfort University • Dr Andreana Drencheva, Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship, King's College London