



COMMONWEALTH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION

CTO@125

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Overview

24-30 September 2026

London, United Kingdom

*A Legacy of Innovation -
Igniting the Commonwealth's
Digital Future*



CTO@125 Anniversary Celebrations Overview

1. Background

The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) will celebrate its 125th Anniversary (CTO@125) in September 2026, marking a historic milestone in the evolution of global communications and digital cooperation. Established in 1901 through the pioneering Pacific Cable Board initiative, the CTO stands as the oldest intergovernmental organisation in the Commonwealth ICT sector and one of the world's longest-serving institutions dedicated to advancing international connectivity.

For 125 years, the Organisation has supported its member countries through successive eras of innovation, from telegraphy and submarine cables to satellite communications, broadband connectivity, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence. Throughout this journey, the CTO has served as a trusted platform for collaboration, enabling governments, regulators, industry leaders, and development partners to work together in addressing shared challenges and harnessing emerging opportunities.

The CTO@125 celebrations are therefore more than an anniversary; they represent a unique moment to honour a remarkable legacy of cooperation, innovation, and progress while shaping the future of digital development across the Commonwealth.

As the world navigates a new era defined by artificial intelligence, digital public infrastructure, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies, CTO@125 will serve as a global platform for reflection, dialogue, and action, celebrating the past while helping to define the next chapter of Commonwealth digital cooperation.

2. Theme

The theme for these celebrations is: *A legacy of Innovation – Igniting the Commonwealth's Digital Future*

3. Objectives

The overall goal of the CTO@125 is to inspire, educate, and connect stakeholders across the Commonwealth and beyond to leverage the transformative potential of digital technologies to accelerate digital transformation and sustainable development.

The key objectives are to:

- Celebrate 125 years of Commonwealth leadership, collaboration, and innovation in telecommunications and digital development.
- Showcase the CTO's enduring contribution to advancing connectivity, digital inclusion, and sustainable development across the Commonwealth.
- Strengthen partnerships among governments, industry, academia, development partners, and the wider digital ecosystem.
- Promote dialogue on emerging technologies, digital transformation, and the policies needed to build an inclusive digital future.
- Catalyse collaboration and action on shared Commonwealth priorities, including connectivity, digital skills, cybersecurity, and AI.
- Recognise outstanding achievements and leadership in digital innovation and development across the Commonwealth.

4. Anniversary Activities

Marking a significant milestone for both the Organisation and the Commonwealth ICT sector, the anniversary programme will provide a unique platform for high level dialogue, strategic networking, knowledge sharing, and partnership development. It will offer an opportunity to reflect on 125 years of innovation and cooperation while forging new partnerships and advancing a shared vision for digital transformation, connectivity, and sustainable development across the Commonwealth. The Anniversary activities include:

- **24–25 September**

- **CTO Members Heritage Visit to PK Porthcurno Museum, Cornwall**

- Members of the CTO will embark on a historical journey from the origins of global communications with an exclusive visit to the PK Porthcurno Museum, the historic landing point of the Pacific Cable. Participants will explore the remarkable story of how pioneering telecommunications infrastructure connected Commonwealth nations across continents, laying the foundation for today's digital world. This immersive experience will celebrate the CTO's rich heritage while highlighting the enduring power of international collaboration in communications.

- **28 September**

- **Commonwealth Digital Nexus,**

- Bringing together ICT service providers, industry leaders, innovators, policymakers, the Commonwealth Digital Nexus will serve as a premier platform for dialogue on the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence in government and public service delivery. Through thought-provoking discussions and practical case studies, participants will explore how emerging technologies can drive efficiency, inclusion, innovation, and sustainable development across Commonwealth nations.

- **28–29 September**

- **Private sector Exhibition**

- The CTO@125 Exhibition will showcase innovative solutions, technologies, products, and services from leading private-sector partners and digital innovators from across the Commonwealth and beyond. The exhibition will provide a platform for networking, business development, knowledge exchange, and partnership building, connecting governments, investors, industry leaders, and development partners to explore solutions that can accelerate digital transformation across member states.

- **29–30 September**

- **Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations**

- The Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations will bring together Ministers and senior government officials from across the Commonwealth to share their countries' digital transformation priorities, success stories, and key challenges. The forum will create opportunities for direct engagement with private-sector leaders, investors, and international organisations, enabling governments to identify strategic partners and unlock new collaborations to accelerate national digital development goals.

- **30 September**

- **CTO@125 Gala Dinner and Digital Awards – *By invitation***

- The pinnacle of the anniversary celebrations, the Gala Dinner and Digital Awards will bring together distinguished guests from across the Commonwealth for an evening of celebration, recognition, and inspiration. The event will honour outstanding achievements in digital leadership, innovation, inclusion, and transformation while commemorating 125 years of Commonwealth cooperation. Featuring keynote addresses, cultural performances, networking opportunities, and prestigious award presentations, the evening will serve as a fitting tribute to the CTO's legacy and its vision for the future.

5. Venue

With the exception of the visit to the PK Porthcurno Museum in Cornwall, all other events will be held at:

InterContinental London Park Lane

One Hamilton Place, Park Lane, London, W1J 7QY, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7409 3131 Fax: +44 (0)20 318 8609

6. The Audience

The CTO@125 celebrations will bring together CTO members and partners Commonwealth ministers, diplomats, regulators, ICT service providers, international organisations, industry leaders, innovators development partners, academia, youth leaders, and the wider Commonwealth ICT community.

7. Registration

Please Register online for at: <https://www.cto.int/event-details/cto-125th-anniversary-week>

8. Sponsorship and Partnership

The CTO invites organisations to partner in the CTO@125 celebrations through a range of sponsorship and partnership opportunities. These collaborations will provide valuable visibility, strategic engagement, thought leadership, and networking opportunities while supporting a landmark celebration of 125 years of Commonwealth digital cooperation and innovation

9. CTO Contact Information

For more information and sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

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or

Visit the CTO website at www.cto.int

10. Conclusion

The CTO@125 celebrations present a unique opportunity to honour 125 years of leadership, partnership, and innovation in telecommunications and digital development across the Commonwealth. Bringing together governments, industry, academia, development partners, and innovators, the programme will foster meaningful dialogue, strengthen strategic partnerships, and showcase solutions that can accelerate digital transformation and sustainable development.

As the CTO marks this historic milestone, the celebrations will reaffirm its enduring commitment to connecting nations, empowering communities, and advancing a more inclusive, resilient, and digitally enabled Commonwealth.

We invite you to join us in celebrating this remarkable legacy and shaping the future of digital cooperation.

Commonwealth Digital Nexus
Provisional High-Level Agenda
28th September 2026

Opening Session Welcome, Opening formalities and introductory keynote presentation.
Coffee Break
Session 1: Panel discussion on AI at Scale: What Leaders Need to Get Right Now Focusing on the opportunities, challenges, and critical decisions organizations must address as AI adoption accelerates globally. • Scaling AI responsibly and effectively • Governance, policy, and trust in AI • AI's role in economic and social development • Emerging opportunities and risks leaders should be preparing for today • AI Sandboxes
Luncheon
Session 2: Emerging Connectivity Technologies The session will highlight practical approaches to building more inclusive, resilient, and future-ready digital ecosystems. • Spectrum Policy and Affordability • Beyond Coverage: How AI, 5G and Open Digital Infrastructure Are Expanding Meaningful Connectivity in Africa. • Wi-Fi Innovations & the Impact on Capacity & User Experience • Building Inclusive Connectivity for Meaningful Digital Participation
Coffee Break
Session 3: The New Digital Ecosystem: Partnerships, Platforms and Competition Exploring how digital infrastructure, platforms, and partnerships can support sustainable urban development, bridge digital divides, and create more inclusive and resilient communities.
Closing Formalities

Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations
Provisional High-Level Agenda
Day 1: 29 September 2026

Opening Session

Welcome, Opening formalities and introductory keynote presentation

Networking Coffee Break

Ministerial Caucus

Session 1: Ministerial Statements

This session will provide ministers from across the Commonwealth with an opportunity to present national priorities, policy initiatives and strategic perspectives on digital transformation. Ministers will share progress, challenges and emerging opportunities in advancing inclusive digital development, expanding connectivity, strengthening digital public infrastructure, promoting digital skills, and harnessing emerging technologies to support economic growth and social development. The session will encourage the exchange of experiences and good practices while identifying areas for deeper collaboration among Commonwealth countries in building secure, inclusive and resilient digital futures.

Networking Luncheon

Session 2: High-Level Panel on AI Governance

This ministerial panel will explore how Commonwealth countries are turning AI ambitions into practical outcomes by strengthening governance, building digital capacity, and adopting responsible AI solutions. Ministers, international organisations and development partners will share experiences on creating trusted AI frameworks, improving public services, fostering economic growth, and advancing collaboration to ensure inclusive and sustainable AI development across member states.

Networking Coffee Break

Session 3: Affordable and Meaningful Connectivity: Closing the Commonwealth Digital Divide

Ministers will highlight the challenges of delivering affordable and meaningful connectivity to underserved communities across Commonwealth nations. Industry leaders will present infrastructure, policy and investment solutions to expand broadband access, improve affordability and strengthen universal digital inclusion through fibre, mobile, satellite and emerging network technologies.

Presentations focusing on Infrastructure and policy solutions for universal connectivity & digital access.

- Rural connectivity models
- Direct-to-Device (D2D) Satellite Connectivity
- Next Generation Satellite Systems
- Space Sustainability

End of Day 1

Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations
Provisional High-Level Agenda
Day 2: 30 September 2026

Session 4: Digital Trust, Internet Governance and Resilient Digital Economies

This session will explore how effective Internet governance, trusted digital ecosystems, and resilient digital infrastructure can support secure, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. Panellists will discuss digital sovereignty, cybersecurity, digital identity, emerging technologies, and the importance of multistakeholder collaboration in strengthening digital economies across the Commonwealth.

- Building a Resilient, Open and Inclusive Internet for Sustainable Economic Growth
- Internet Governance, Digital Sovereignty & the Multistakeholder Model
- Cybersecurity Capacity & Digital Trust in an Increasingly Connected World
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

Networking Coffee Break

Partnerships Recognition & Remarks

Closing Ceremony

GALA DINNER & AWARDS CEREMONY