COMMONWEALTH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION

CTO @125

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

EventGuide

28-30 September 2026

London, United Kingdom



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

125th Anniversary Week
Event Guide



Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum
Chairman,
Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation

“Throughout its 125-year journey, the CTO has remained a trusted platform for cooperation, bringing together governments, regulators, industry, academia and development partners to advance communications and digital development across the Commonwealth. From the historic Pacific Cable and the All-Red Route to today's conversations on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, satellite connectivity and digital transformation, the organisation has continually evolved to meet the needs of its members.”



The Hon.ourable Shirley Botchwey
Secretary General
Commonwealth Secretariat

“On behalf of the entire Commonwealth, I warmly congratulate the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation as it marks its 125th anniversary. This is a milestone of real significance – not only for the CTO, but for the Commonwealth as a whole. Few institutions can trace their story so powerfully through the evolution of our modern world.
The CTO’s history is, in many ways, a history of connection itself. Its origins in the Pacific Cable Board of 1901 remind us that communications have always been more than technology. They have been lifelines of diplomacy, trade, governance, learning and human understanding.”



Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Secretary General
International Telecommunications Union

“On behalf of the International Telecommunication Union, I warmly congratulate the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation on its 125th anniversary. Our partnership reflects more than a century of shared purpose, making this milestone one we mark together.
Technological change is constant. So too is our confidence that CTO will continue supporting its members in navigating digital transformation while strengthening the policy, regulatory and institutional capabilities needed for human-centered innovation. ITU looks forward to continuing our work with CTO and its members so that digital technologies serve humanity, strengthen societies and economies, and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development for all.”

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Welcome Message

Secretary General

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation's (CTO) 125th Anniversary Celebrations in the United Kingdom.

Guided by the theme, "A Legacy of Innovation: Igniting the Commonwealth's Digital Future," these commemorations offer an opportunity to reflect on our remarkable journey while embracing the transformative possibilities of the digital age.

The CTO traces its origins to the Pacific Cable Board of 1901, a pioneering partnership among Commonwealth nations that laid the submarine cable linking Canada to the Pacific region to complete a global telegraph network. This landmark achievement transformed global communications and laid the foundation for what has become the Commonwealth's oldest and enduring intergovernmental ICT organisation.

Many aspects of the CTO's distinguished 125-year legacy of advancing telecommunications and ICT cooperation across the Commonwealth are preserved at the PK Porthcurno Museum of Global Communications in Cornwall. The museum stands as a testament to the vision, collaboration and innovation that have shaped communications development throughout our shared history.

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Welcome Message

Secretary General

From 28 to 30 September 2026, a series of high-level engagements will explore the future of digital development across the Commonwealth. The celebrations begin with the Commonwealth Digital Nexus on 28th September, a unique platform that brings together ICT service providers, policymakers, regulators and industry leaders to exchange insights, showcase emerging technologies and promote effective digital adoption. This will be followed by the Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations, from 29 to 30 September, which will examine opportunities to accelerate digital transformation, strengthen strategic partnerships and advance a shared vision for the Commonwealth's digital future.

Our celebrations will culminate on the evening of 30th September in a Gala Dinner and Digital Excellence Awards Ceremony, recognising the outstanding achievements of CTO members in advancing digital transformation, innovation and inclusive connectivity across the Commonwealth.

As we commemorate 125 years of service and cooperation, let us draw inspiration from our rich legacy and renew our commitment to building a resilient, inclusive and digitally empowered Commonwealth for generations to come.
Welcome to this historic occasion of celebrating together the spirit of innovation that has defined the CTO for more than a century.

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Overview of the Week

Introduction

The CTO@125 celebrations mark a historic milestone, celebrating 125 years of leadership and collaboration in advancing digital development across the Commonwealth. The programme will provide a platform for dialogue, partnership, and knowledge exchange while shaping a shared vision for connectivity, digital transformation, and sustainable development.

Objectives

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.

Audience

- Commonwealth Ministers
- Diplomats
- Regulators
- ICT service providers
- International organisations
- Industry leaders
- Academia

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Overview of the Week

The Anniversary activities include:

24–25 September - CTO Members Heritage Visit to PK Porthcurno Museum, Cornwall
Members will embark on a historical journey with a visit to the PK Porthcurno Museum, exploring the origins of global communications and the Pacific Cable. The experience will celebrate the CTO's heritage and the enduring legacy of international collaboration in connecting the Commonwealth.

28 September - Commonwealth Digital Nexus
The Commonwealth Digital Nexus will bring together leaders from government and industry to explore the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence in public service delivery. Through expert discussions and practical insights, the event will examine how AI can drive innovation, inclusion, efficiency, and sustainable development across the Commonwealth.

28–29 September - Private sector Exhibition
The CTO@125 Exhibition will showcase innovative technologies and solutions from across the Commonwealth, providing a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and partnerships that support 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 officials to share digital transformation priorities, exchange experiences, and foster partnerships that advance digital development across the Commonwealth.

30 September - CTO@125 Gala Dinner and Digital Awards – By invitation
The Gala Dinner and Digital Awards will conclude the CTO@125 celebrations by recognising excellence in digital leadership, innovation, and transformation across the Commonwealth while celebrating 125 years of collaboration and the Organisation's vision for the future.

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AGENDA
Commonwealth Digital Nexus
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

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AGENDA
Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations
Day 1: 29 September 2026

Opening Session Welcome, Opening formalities and introductory keynote presentation
Networking Coffee Break
Ministerial Caucus
Networking Luncheon
Session 1: 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 2: 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

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AGENDA
Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations
Day 1
2: 30 September 2026

Session 3: 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. Panelists 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
Networking Coffee Break
Session 4: Partnerships Recognition & Remarks
Closing Ceremony
GALA DINNER & AWARDS CEREMONY

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VENUE
InterContinental London Park Lane by IHG



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INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

Meeting Information

Dates	Time	Event	Description	Dress Code
24-25 September 2026	10:00-15:00	Remembering our past	Visit to Porthcurno Telegraph Museum	Business Casual
28 Sep...	09:00-16:00	Commonwealth Digital Nexus	Using AI to enhance legacy organisations and operations	Business Formal
29-30 September 2026	09:00-16:00	Ministerial Alliance for Digital Nations	Finding digital solutions to challenges facing the Commonwealth and fostering collective action	Business Formal
29-30 September 2026	18:00-22:00	125th Anniversary Gala Dinner and Awards	Recognising Commonwealth Digital Excellence at a celebratory dinner	Lounge Suit/Formal

DRESS CODE KEY

***Business Casual -** Casual business attire is pretty ambiguous, but generally means slacks, khakis, or a skirt with a dress shirt, blouse or polo. Dresses and seasonal sport coats fall into this dress code as well.

***Business Formal -** A business formal dress code is characterized by a suit jacket with matching pants or a skirt.

***Lounge Suit/Formal -** For Men - The Suit: A matching two-piece or three-piece suit in dark colors like navy blue, charcoal, or dark grey.

For Women - The Dress: Floor-length gowns or elegant midi/ankle-length dresses. Dressy jumpsuits or tailored pantsuits

MEET THE SPEAKERS

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Join the conversation



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SPEAKERS



Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Secretary General
ITU



Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey
Secretary General
Commonwealth



Bernadette Lewis
Secretary General
CTO



Rodney Taylor,
Secretary General,
Caribbean Telecommunications Union



T. P. Chedumbrum
CHAIRMAN
CTO



Professor Tim Unwin

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SPEAKERS



Aline Matta
Head of the UN-Habitat Geneva Liaison Office



Professor Michael Goldsmith
Senior Research Fellow
Worcester College, Oxford



Dr. Martha Suarez
President
Dynamic Spectrum Alliance



Mr. Detlef Fuehrer
Director, Spectrum Management & regulatory Affairs EMEA, Hewlett Packard Enterprise



Andrew Muir, Chief Executive Officer, FarrPoint Consultancy

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SPEAKERS



Peng Zhao
Vice President Policy & Regulatory
Global Satellite Operator's Association (GSOA)



Head of Operations, EMEA for Amazon Leo



Mr. Purva Rajkotia
Global Director of Business Strategy & Intelligence (GBSI) and the Connectivity IEEE



Ms. Donna Murphy
Senior VP, Global Regulatory & Technology Policy
Viasat



Ms. Sonia Jorge
Executive Director
Global Digital Inclusion Partnership



Mr. Alex Roytblat
Vice President of Worldwide Regulatory Affairs Wi-Fi Alliance

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SPEAKERS



Ms. Lele Modise
Group Chief Executive - Legal and Regulatory Officer
MTN Group



Ms. Giorgia Abeltino,
Sr. Director Government Affairs and Public Policy Cloud Europe, Google



Ms. Jeanine Vos,
Head of SDG Accelerator AI for Impact, Sustainability & Emerging Tech, GSMA



Ms. Sophie Tomlinson
Director of Programs, Datasphere Initiative



Dr. Mark Kennedy,
Associate Professor, Imperial College London



Janis Karklins
Head of Government Engagement
ICANN

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SPEAKERS



Vashti Maharaj, Adviser Digital Trade Policy, Commonwealth Secretariat



Veemal Gungadin CEO, Mauritius Telecom



Carlos Rey-Moreno Co-Lead Local Networks: Policy & Strategy Association for Progressive Communications



Mr. Fargani Tambeayuk, Director of Public Policy, Francophone Africa & Director of Connectivity and Innovation Policy, Africa, Metar



Mr. Pasquale Cataldi, Associate Director, Policy Impact Partner



Chris Locke, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, Internet Society Foundation

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SPEAKERS



Dorothy V. Stanley, President, IEEE Standards Association (IEEE SA)



Chris Disspain, Senior Advisor on Policy & Internet Governance, Identity Digital Inc.



Joyce Dogniez Vice President, Empowerment and Outreach, Internet Society Foundation



Sally Costerton Head of Stakeholder Engagement ICANN



Prof. David Eaves Associate Professor & Co-Deputy Director UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose & Advisor to Co-Develop

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