





## Royal African Society

Patron: H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge  
Chair: Zeinab Badawi

### ABOUT THE ROYAL AFRICAN SOCIETY

The Royal African Society (RAS), founded in 1901, is the leading advocacy body for Africa in the UK. It is an inclusive membership organisation that provides opportunities for people to connect, learn, celebrate and debate about all aspects of Africa and people of African descent. Through events, publications and digital channels, we share insight, enable discussion and facilitate mutual understanding between the UK and Africa. We amplify African voices and interests in academia, business, politics, the arts and education, reaching a global network of well over one million.

**Our Vision:** A more equal and just world in which the intellectual, cultural and socio-economic contributions of African countries and people are recognised and celebrated.

**Our Mission:** We amplify African voices and interests, fostering understanding and more equitable relations between people in the UK, Africa and the rest of the world.

**Our Constitution:** RAS is a registered membership charity governed by a Royal Charter. Our Royal Patron is HRH The Duke of Cambridge, who succeeded HM The Queen in January 2017.

In 2020 the RAS annual turnover was £521,000, with funding derived from royalties from our journal *African Affairs*; grants and donations from trusts, foundations, public funding bodies, companies and individuals; corporate membership and partnerships; individual membership subscriptions; events sponsorship and ticket income; and other earned income. It has healthy reserves. We aim to grow and diversify our funding base to ensure the charity's financial sustainability in the longer term.

RAS currently has eight permanent members of staff, including the Director and Deputy Director, plus four temporary contract staff, some part-time. It is based in London and has offices at SOAS University of London, near Russell Square.

***“The Royal African Society plays an invaluable role in bringing African perspectives, views and talent across a huge number of fields to wide audiences. The new Chair would be assuming the role at a time of expansion and increasing demand for this kind of critical engagement. I have enjoyed my time immensely at RAS and found it richly rewarding. The enthusiasm and inspiration of its staff, members and audiences never fails to impress.”***

**– Zeinab Badawi, Chair**

***“The range and diversity of RAS activities and networks is truly impressive. The Society not only connects Britain and Africa, but engages all those interested in Africa, from Africa, and of African origin in this country, to build even closer links and create inspiring connections and new opportunities for partnership.”***

**– Dr Nick Westcott, Director**



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### The Context

This year RAS celebrates its **120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**. At a time when many charities are facing existential challenges, RAS is in good health and is planning to use the Anniversary to raise its national profile, target new audiences and widen its appeal.

RAS uses its reputation, contacts, convening power and networks across many different sectors to bring African issues and culture to the public, reaching well over one million people worldwide. Though a small organisation, RAS has great impact both on public attitudes and public policy. To reach an even wider audience we are seeking increased engagement, new partnerships and the mobilisation of further resources to promote this work.

RAS's recent Theory of Change articulates its fundamental aim to ensure that ***African voices are at the centre of British and global conversations***. To achieve this, RAS targets four key outcomes:

- **CONNECT:** The people and countries of Africa and the UK have stronger, more mutually beneficial relationships
- **LEARN:** Knowledge and understanding about African countries and people is increased in the UK and the wider world
- **DEBATE:** African voices are amplified in international academic, political, economic, cultural and social agendas
- **CELEBRATE:** The contribution of African countries and people to global politics, academia, economics and culture is increasingly respected and celebrated.

RAS will achieve these outcomes by delivering its main outputs: membership and networks, research and analysis, education and training, advocacy and influencing, events, festivals and awards.

### The Opportunity

Our current Chair, Zeinab Badawi, will complete her second term in the summer of 2021 having led RAS through a period that consolidated its reputation as the country's leading advocate for Africa and expanded its engagement with all people of African origin in this country. We are now seeking a suitable successor to lead the Council for the next phase of our development.

The Chair of RAS should be able to provide strong, public leadership for RAS in pursuing its mission, nurturing contacts with Africa and connecting with all people of African origin in this country. They should therefore have strong connections with Africa and the African/Caribbean diaspora, alongside relevant experience and an outlook that is both international and inclusive. The Chair plays an important role in strengthening RAS's public profile and top-level contacts in both the UK and Africa by helping marshal the resources of the Council, cultivating its network of contacts and participating in RAS's high level public events. In this way the Chair will contribute to a deeper understanding of the continent and its people and act as a visible champion for Africa in Britain.

As Chair of the Council, they will help set the RAS's strategic direction and support the Director in strengthening the team to enable it to deliver the organisation's goals. The Chair will ensure good governance and best practice in management and oversight; will oversee succession planning for the Council and Director; and will create a culture of informed decision making, appropriate challenge and inspiration so that the Council can help RAS to thrive.



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### **Governance Structure**

RAS is a registered charity in the UK governed by a Royal Charter and Byelaws, which were amended and approved by the Privy Council on 10 November 2010. The full audited accounts are contained in the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements, which are presented at our Annual General Meeting and sent to the Charity Commission every year.

Executive responsibility for RAS activities and programmes rests with the Director (and in his absence, the Deputy Director). The Director reports to the Council, which provides strategic guidance, support and financial oversight for RAS.

The Council is the ultimate authority controlling 'the affairs and property of the Society', and its members constitute RAS's Trustees. RAS's members elect the Chair, Honorary Treasurer and fifteen Council members, to which are added up to four co-opted Council members and *ex officio* the Co-Editors of the journal *African Affairs*.

RAS's three Vice-Chairs are chosen by the Council itself. Council membership terms run for three years. Elected members who have completed their term may retire from office or stand for re-election at the RAS AGM. Elected and co-opted members may be re-elected or re-co-opted for a second term of three years. The Council meets normally four times a year, including twice as the Executive Committee of the Council (Exco), which consists of the Chair, Vice-Chairs, Treasurer and three other Council members, though all Council members are also invited and usually attend.

Three sub-committees of the Council (on Governance and Nominations, Finance and Audit, and Fundraising and Corporate Engagement) are chaired by different members of the Council and meet in advance of each Council meeting to settle minor matters and prepare issues for the Council discussion or decision.

Two staff posts are provided for in the Byelaws: the Director (Dr Nicholas Westcott) and Secretary (normally the Deputy Director), both of whom are appointed by the Council and constitute the senior management. Other staff are appointed by the senior managers.

Council members' biographies are available here: <https://royalafricansociety.org/about/council>

Biographies for the RAS team are available here: <https://royalafricansociety.org/about/team>

### **THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR**

The Chair leads the Council, ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for good governance of the charity and provides the strategic direction that the Director and staff need. The Chair is pivotal in creating the conditions for the overall effectiveness of RAS, both inside and outside the boardroom.

Internally, as Chair, you would lead the management of meetings, set the tone of board communication and provide support to the Director in implementing RAS's strategy. Externally, the Chair is RAS's champion and advocate, strengthening its reputation, amplifying its key messages and articulating its value and relevance.

The Chair holds the authority of, and enables the work of, the Council, while the Director has the executive authority delegated by Council to put its decisions into effect.



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### **Time commitment and location**

There are typically four meetings of the Council per year (two as Executive Committee meetings) and one AGM, usually linked to a Council meeting. The Chair presides at major events, such as the Annual Lecture, meetings with African Presidents and events involving the Royal Patron. They will maintain regular contact with the Director, providing support and consulting particularly on major decisions. Over the year as a whole, these commitments amount to a time commitment of about two days per month.

The successful candidate will be elected for a term of three years and be eligible for a further three-year term. The position is voluntary and not remunerated, though exceptional expenses can be considered. The successful candidate should have frequent and easy access London where most Council and other meetings are held.

### **The Chair has specific responsibility for leadership in the following areas:**

- Agreeing the Council agenda and chairing Council meetings to allow constructive debate
- Providing strategic direction and enabling Council to take necessary decisions, delegating where appropriate to the relevant sub-committee
- Promoting RAS to key stakeholders and potential funders and donors, and mobilising Council members to do the same
- Representing RAS at major events (in coordination with the Director)
- Supporting the organisation through growth and change
- Line managing the Director and carrying out an annual performance appraisal
- Succession planning for the Director and Council
- Maintaining RAS's reputation by encouraging high standards of propriety, integrity and probity and promoting optimal operations and stewardship of resources

### **Person Specification**

#### **Experience & Attainments**

- Previous experience as a Chair, Vice Chair or Trustee
- Demonstrable understanding of good governance and strategic leadership
- Evidence of success in strategic development of an organisation
- Proven success in advocacy and brokering strong productive relationships
- Track record of successful resource mobilisation
- Knowledge of the charity sector and membership organisations
- Financial awareness, including of charitable organisations

#### **Attributes & Outlook**

- Ability to lead with vision and both inspire and embolden the RAS team and Council
- Demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Diplomatic skills to handle diverse stakeholders and partners (including high-profile VIPs, such as heads of state, government officials, business leaders and cultural icons)



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- Ability to understand and manage risk, including reputational, financial and organisational
- Proactive and pragmatic; inclusive and consensual, ensuring that all views are heard
- Lateral, solution-focused and able to handle delicate situations

### **Role-specific capabilities**

- Passion for, and interest in, the advancement of the African continent and its global diaspora
- Commitment to RAS's charitable objectives - advocate for RAS vision, mission and values
- Strong working relationship with the Director, the Vice Chairs and the wider Council
- Strategic thinking to support the executive in developing the business plan and objectives
- Contacts and networks in the UK, on the African continent and internationally
- Willingness to leverage personal and professional networks to support RAS's relationship building, fundraising and partnership endeavours
- Understanding of and commitment to good governance
- Inspiring public speaker and efficient moderator
- Willingness to commit sufficient time to the role



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### HOW TO APPLY

**Please submit a CV and cover letter outlining your interest and suitability for the role as soon as possible, and no later than Monday 12 April, by email to:**

Lucy Blythe, Director, Philia International

Email: [lucy@philia-intl.com](mailto:lucy@philia-intl.com)

Your cover letter should complement your CV, giving reasons for interest in the role, evidence of your fit with the person specification criteria and any additional relevant skills, experience or networks.

Initial enquiries in confidence are welcome before submission. Please contact Lucy Blythe by email to set up a call.

### What's Our Process?

Philia International will be managing the search. Lucy Blythe is available for confidential conversations before application.

Expressions of interest are welcomed on a rolling basis before 12 April 2021. Initial conversations with potential candidates will be conducted by phone or video call with Lucy Blythe of Philia International. Shortlisted candidates will be informed of the next steps. We anticipate that an appointment will be made by June 2021, with the incoming Chair formally elected at the RAS AGM on 17 June 2021

*RAS is committed to being a truly inclusive organisation—from our Council and team members to our members. We treat all role applications equally, regardless of age, disability, gender identity or gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic.*

### ABOUT YOUR DATA

As part of the application process, RAS will acquire personal data. RAS uses this information to process your application. We will treat all personal information in line with current data protection legislation and our data protection policy. For more information on how we use the information you have provided, please see our [Privacy Policy online](#).

In order for us to process this information and to comply with data protection legislation, we require your consent. You are not required to give your consent; you acknowledge that any consent given is freely given. Your application for this role is not dependent on your giving consent to our processing of this data.

**PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION ASAP AND NO LATER THAN 12 APRIL 2021**