The Commonwealth

2013 / 2015

Biennial Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General

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01 Embracing Reform: Sharper Impact

The two years covered by this report, from July 2013 to June 2015, were a period of transformation for the Commonwealth Secretariat as we worked to translate into practical action our Strategic Plan from 2013/14 to 2016/17. The Plan is a clearly signposted roadmap, following implementation of the most fundamental reforms for a generation, both of the work we do and of the way we do it.

Introduction

Change has been embraced with enthusiasm, and adoption of the Plan marked the opening of a fresh era of opportunity for the Secretariat and the member countries we serve. Building on our reputation and track record, we were able to capitalise on many successes and organisational strengths, with renewed focus on the unique trust and advantages the Commonwealth offers, and with an orientation to practical outcomes.

The Plan streamlines the activities undertaken by the Secretariat, directing efforts towards three strategic goals: democracy and the rule of law, inclusive growth and sustainable development, and a well-connected and networked Commonwealth. It sets out six interrelated work areas to achieve these goals: democracy, public institutions, social development, youth, development across the Commonwealth, and development across small and vulnerable states.

The 2013 to 2015 period saw broad global challenges as member countries adjusted to the lasting budgetary impact of the worldwide financial crisis. In implementing our strategy we have been mindful of the challenging economic pressures facing members. We are now delivering more efficiently and cost-effectively for the benefit, collectively and individually, of all Commonwealth member countries and citizens. Levels of attainment have risen with the adoption of a robust Strategic Results Framework. Results Based Management is now firmly embedded throughout the Secretariat, with staff trained to focus on evidence-based impact when planning and reporting on programmes and projects.

Our capacity for networking is a distinctive feature of the Commonwealth, drawing people together, sharing experiences and knowledge, and thereby gaining mutual and collective benefit. Rapid digitalisation through Commonwealth Connects and other contemporary ICT platforms – in areas such as election management, health, education and climate change – is modernising and redefining the convening power and capacity-building strength of the Commonwealth.

The end term assessment of the Millennium Development Goals took place during the period under review, and as discussions continued on the new Sustainable Development Goals to succeed them, our collective Commonwealth voice and the diverse perspectives of our member countries provided inclusiveness and depth. Small states account for more than half of the Commonwealth's membership, and an emphasis on responding to their needs has been maintained as an area in which Commonwealth expertise and comparative advantage are widely acknowledged.

Embracing change with energy and enthusiasm, the Secretariat has continued to demonstrate the distinctive global contribution the Commonwealth can make as a uniquely diverse and values-based family.

02 Democracy

The Commonwealth Secretariat strengthened the culture and institutions of democracy in member countries during the first two years of the Strategic Plan 2013/14 to 2016/17. Support was provided to deepen adherence to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values (democracy, rule of law, and human rights) in line with the Charter of the Commonwealth.

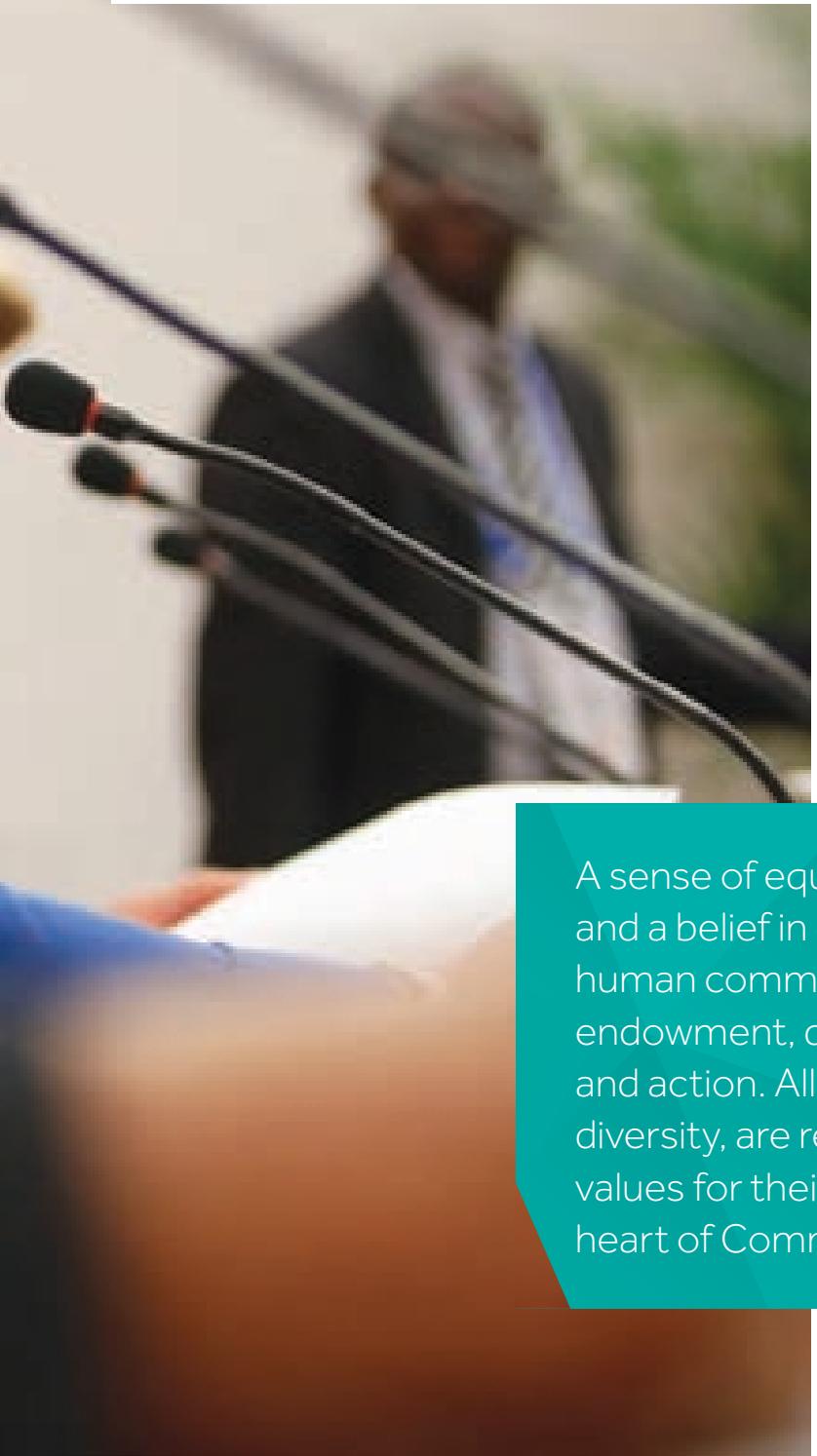
Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Democracy**

- Supported the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), including in its work with Fiji and Maldives, and in its efforts to enhance CMAG's work to advance Commonwealth political values more proactively and positively with member countries
- Supported the second Commonwealth Electoral Network (CEN) biennial conference, 'Managing Elections in the 21st Century: Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Electoral Integrity'. The Secretariat also further developed and supported on-line interaction between national election bodies on the CEN
- Launched the Commonwealth Junior Election Professionals Initiative, which trained 40 professionals from 27 member states, all of whom recorded that their effectiveness had been materially strengthened
- Observed elections in 19 member states, with recommendations provided for further strengthening of electoral processes in all of them

Promoting adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles

Supporting the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) was set up in 1995 to deal with serious or persistent violations of the Commonwealth's political values. The Group's mandate was strengthened in 2011 when Heads of Government agreed to reforms that included clearer guidelines and timeframes, and a mandate to enable the Group to engage proactively and positively in areas of concern.



Kamalesh Sharma,
Commonwealth Secretary-General

A sense of equity in international relations and a belief in equal outcomes for the entire human community, irrespective of size and endowment, drives Commonwealth belief and action. All members, despite their vast diversity, are ready to live by shared core values for their people. These are at the heart of Commonwealth kinship and affinity.

CMAG 'circumstances'

The Secretariat developed new ways of briefing CMAG to ensure that the Group is better informed on developments in member countries where the eight non-exhaustive 'circumstances' of concern agreed by Heads of Government might arise. These circumstances include:

- The unilateral abrogation of a democratic constitution or serious threats to constitutional rule;
- The suspension or prevention of the lawful functioning of parliament or other key democratic institutions;
- The postponement of national elections without constitutional or other reasonable justification;
- The systematic denial of political space, such as through detention of political leaders or restriction of freedom of association, assembly or expression;
- A national electoral process that is seriously flawed;
- The abrogation of the rule of law or undermining of the independence of the judiciary;
- The systematic violation of human rights of the population, or of any communities or groups, by the member government concerned; and,
- Significant restrictions on the media or civil society that prevent them from playing their legitimate role.

The Commonwealth Secretariat strengthened its engagement and assistance to member countries where the Commonwealth's political values and commitments were deemed to be under particular stress, including in Fiji and Maldives.

The Group, in its role as the custodian of Commonwealth values, welcomed the Secretariat's technical support for preparations ahead of the September 2014 Parliamentary elections in Fiji, which marked the restoration of civilian constitutional democratic rule. In September 2014, Fiji was reinstated as a full member of the Commonwealth.

Supporting the Secretary-General's Good Offices for Peace

The Commonwealth Secretariat strengthened its capacity for analysis and proactive engagement in support of the Secretary-General's Good Offices for Peace, providing advice and specialist technical assistance, where sought, to member countries. The Secretary-General worked personally, and through his Good Offices envoys and advisers, to promote adherence to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values.

The Commonwealth Secretariat delivered capacity-building to conduct national dialogues, reduce tensions and promote harmonious relations between national stakeholders. In March 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat organised a training course on Commonwealth Mediation and Negotiation Skills for five election management bodies in Durban, South Africa.

Good Offices

The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Swaziland, the former President of Malawi, Bakili Muluzi, continued to advance practical measures aimed at implementing reforms already reflected in Swaziland's revised constitution.

The Prime Minister of Lesotho, Pakalitha Mosisili, and the United Nations Development Programme praised the work of Good Offices in Lesotho, where the Secretary-General had deployed an adviser to support coalition governance.

Supporting fair, credible and inclusive elections

Commonwealth Observation Groups and Expert Teams were deployed to observe:

- **Guyana** National and Regional Elections, 11 May 2015
- **Nigeria** Presidential and National Assembly Elections, 28 March 2015
- **Lesotho** National Assembly Election, 28 February 2015
- **Sri Lanka** Presidential Election, 8 January 2015
- **Dominica** General Election, 8 December 2014
- **Namibia** Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 28 November 2014
- **Solomon Islands** National Parliamentary Election, 19 November 2014
- **Botswana** General Election, 24 October 2014
- **Mozambique** National and Provincial Elections, 15 October 2014
- **Antigua and Barbuda** General Election, 12 June 2014
- **Malawi** Tripartite Elections, 20 May 2014
- **South Africa** National and Provincial Elections, 7 May 2014
- **Maldives** People's Majlis Election, 22 March 2014
- **Cameroon** Legislative and Municipal Elections, 30 September 2013
- **Sri Lanka** Northern Provincial Council Election, 21 September 2013
- **Swaziland** National Election, 20 September 2013
- **Rwanda** Legislative Election (Chamber of Deputies), 16–18 September 2013
- **Maldives** Presidential Elections, Re-Run and Run-off, 7 September, 9 November and 16 November 2013
- **Pakistan** Presidential Election, 30 July 2013

In 2013, the Office of the Commissioner of Elections of Sri Lanka invited the Commonwealth to send observers to witness landmark elections in the Northern Province. Feedback to members of the Commonwealth Group indicated that the presence and conduct of the observers had contributed significantly to an atmosphere of calm on Election Day, and in the days following. The Group's recommendation to expand the role of local observers was implemented during the January 2015 Presidential Election, when Commonwealth observers were also present.

Member countries adopt recommendations of Commonwealth Election Observer Groups

The Commonwealth Secretariat assisted member countries to develop electoral management institutions and improve the quality, credibility and management of electoral processes.

Kenya strengthened its election management board by making it more inclusive and transparent, improved voter registration and improved the procedure for resolving election disputes.

Maldives acted on recommendations of a Commonwealth Observer Group in 2013, setting up a National Elections Complaints Bureau and designing smaller polling stations to provide voters with greater privacy.

Malawi audited its voter register prior to the 2014 elections. Between the 2009 and 2014 elections, the Malawi Electoral Commission took note of a recommendation from a Commonwealth Observer Group regarding the slow processing of complaints and set up a Complaints Handling Unit. The new unit processed complaints in the 2014 election more quickly and efficiently than in previous elections.

Rwanda created greater choice for voters by establishing the Rwanda Governance Board, which enabled independent candidates and four new parties to stand in the 2013 parliamentary election.

The Commonwealth Electoral Network

The Commonwealth Electoral Network (CEN), conceived by the Commonwealth Secretary-General and launched in 2010, aspires to a 'gold standard' of election management in the Commonwealth. The network promotes good practice in managing elections, facilitates peer-to-peer exchanges of experience and fosters the community of Commonwealth electoral management bodies. The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to support the work of the CEN in developing the capacity of Commonwealth election management bodies to conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections. Commonwealth Connects, the Commonwealth's online collaboration platform, hosts secure workspaces for members of the CEN to promote peer-to-peer networking and support.

In June 2014, the Secretariat supported the second Commonwealth Electoral Network biennial conference, 'Managing Elections in the 21st Century: Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Electoral Integrity', in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates from 36 of the Commonwealth's national electoral management boards shared best practices, practical experiences, ideas and technical expertise. Links nurtured and strengthened through the Commonwealth Electoral Network are a powerful and practical illustration of Commonwealth networking as a global good.

Junior Election Professionals Initiative

Nurturing junior election professionals is key to developing a cadre of highly skilled election administrators committed to Commonwealth political values and principles. In response to a request from members of the CEN, and made possible through the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched the Commonwealth Junior Election Professionals Initiative in July 2013.

As a result, a pan-Commonwealth pilot workshop for junior election professionals was held in India in October 2013, co-hosted by the Election Commission of India, and a Commonwealth-Pacific regional workshop in Canberra was organised in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission, in March 2014.

The two workshops brought together around 40 junior election professionals from 27 Commonwealth election management bodies, over half of whom were women, to examine difficult but critical issues such as voter registration, boundary delineation, incumbency, the challenges and opportunities of new technology, and working with political parties. Three further regional workshops took place for the Caribbean and Americas in 2014 and Africa and Asia in 2015. Members continue conversations through the Commonwealth Connects online platform.

03 Public Institutions

Effective, efficient and equitable public institutions are critical for establishing and sustaining democracy, good governance and development. During the reporting period, the Commonwealth Secretariat directed support to strengthening institutions for protecting and promoting human rights, improving public administration, enhancing judicial independence and supporting member countries in the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Human rights**

- Supported the establishment of an NHRI in Jamaica and the strengthening of NHRIs in Sri Lanka, Seychelles and Swaziland
- Enabled exchanges of good practice between NHRIs through capacity development and networking opportunities
- Facilitated the adoption of the Kigali Declaration, providing a framework for practical action to prevent and eradicate child, early and forced marriage
- Enabled Small Island Developing States to constructively engage with the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) ahead of and during reviews in Geneva
- Enabled the adoption of the Mahé and Pipitea Declarations by African and Pacific parliamentarians, providing a framework for the strengthened role of parliamentarians with international human rights mechanisms such as the UPR
- Enabled the development of a National Human Rights Action Plan in Seychelles
- Enabled the development of human rights education curricula for secondary schools in Mauritius in furtherance of accepted UPR recommendations
- Developed and delivered a human rights education programme for youth trainers working in communities across the Commonwealth
- Developed and delivered a human rights education programme for law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth
- Developed and delivered a human rights leadership programme for Permanent Secretaries in Barbados
- Enabled exchanges of good practice and consensus-building on the essential components of national reconciliation through the Commonwealth Roundtable on Reconciliation and subsequent advocacy efforts

Supporting institutions and mechanisms to promote and protect human rights

The Commonwealth Secretariat continued its work to strengthen public institutions and processes with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights in the Commonwealth.

This work has focused on the establishment and strengthening of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) as well as on providing technical assistance to member countries to engage constructively with the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.

Establishing and strengthening National Human Rights Institutions

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided technical assistance to the Government of Jamaica for the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). The Secretariat advised the government on the establishment process; and legislation compliant with the UN's Paris Principles on human rights. A national stakeholder conference is planned for delivery before the end of 2015.

As part of the Secretary-General's Good Offices engagement in Sri Lanka, the Secretariat provided technical support to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka to strengthen its compliance with the Paris Principles in relation to effectiveness. The Secretariat developed the capacities of the Commission to conduct national inquiries by facilitating the sharing of good practice from the NHRIs of Northern Ireland, Namibia and South Africa.

In September 2013, the Secretariat convened a Reconciliation Roundtable in Vavuniya, Northern Province, Sri Lanka, which included the participation of civil society and religious leaders. As a result, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka had a distinct and officially-recognised role in promoting national reconciliation, including taking forward the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). In May 2014, the Secretariat convened a workshop to support the Commission to develop the RAP. The workshop drew on the expertise of representatives of accredited Commonwealth NHRIs such as the South African Human Rights Commission as well as civil society organisations from across the country. The RAP has now been finalised.

The Secretariat also supported Sri Lanka's Commission in peer engagement and developing understanding of the international human rights mechanisms based in Geneva in view of a future re-accreditation application under the Paris Principles. In March 2014, the Secretariat hosted a 10-member delegation of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka in Geneva during the 25th session of the Human Rights Council. The visit strengthened understanding of the Commission's potential role and identified opportunities for constructive engagement with international human rights mechanisms and agencies.

The Secretariat is also providing technical assistance to the Governments of Swaziland and Seychelles to strengthen their NHRIs. Institutional needs assessments were conducted in May 2013 and June 2014 and the Secretariat will be supporting the implementation of recommendations from these needs assessments in subsequent reporting periods.

The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI), established in 2007, supports networking and the sharing of information and good practices in order to strengthen NHRIs and their compliance with the Paris Principles. Through the Forum, the Commonwealth Secretariat facilitated capacity development and the sharing of good practices on a number of human rights issues in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth's long tradition as a trusted partner in promoting and protecting human rights, and its track record in the use of mediation and quiet diplomacy in the peaceful resolution of disputes makes it an ideal partner for this training programme.

Vasu Gounden, Executive Director,
African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes

Mediation and negotiation

In August 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened a capacity development initiative in Kuala Lumpur to strengthen the mediation and negotiation skills of senior officers in 14 National Human Rights Institutions. This work was done in partnership with SUHAKAM - the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia - and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) Follow up work is envisioned for the next reporting period.

Judge Priyantha Perera,
Chair, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

We have had a tremendously bad experience in this country ... however we must now move forward to achieve sustainable reconciliation.

Child, Early and Forced Marriage – the Kigali Declaration

It is estimated that over the next decade 140 million girls will marry before they reach the age of 18. Half of these girls live in the Commonwealth. Heads have recognised early and forced marriage as an issue of concern in the Commonwealth and have mandated the Commonwealth Secretariat to 'address the issue of child, early and forced marriage, giving due consideration to the domestic legislation of member countries and relevant international law' (2013 Colombo Communiqué).

The 2013 Commonwealth Roundtable on Early and Forced Marriage delivered in partnership with Plan UK and the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), recognised the unique role that NHRIs play in human rights protection and promotion in relation to child, early and forced marriage. They called upon the Secretariat to further bridge the roles between NHRIs and civil society organisations and to facilitate the sharing of good practices between them.

In partnership with SUHAKAM and the Rwanda Human Rights Commission, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened a working session on child, early and forced marriage in Kigali in May 2015. The session enabled NHRIs to share experiences and good practice examples of their efforts to end child, early and forced marriage. At the working session, NHRIs adopted the Kigali Declaration, which is a set of 17 practical actions for NHRIs to take forward to prevent and eradicate child marriage. These actions include monitoring the enforcement of legislation, improving data collection, promoting compulsory education for girls and mobilising the support of traditional structures, men and boys.

The Kigali Declaration provides the framework for the Secretariat's further work on this issue, which includes collaboration with the African Union, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the development of a multi-country, multi-stakeholder and multi-strategy project focused on areas of Commonwealth comparative advantage.

Karen McKenzie, Head of Human Rights, Commonwealth Secretariat

> Child, early and forced marriage is a human rights concern which deserves more programmatic, innovative and grassroots attention if we are serious about preventing and eliminating this harmful traditional practice. The Kigali Declaration offers a blueprint for us to do this and to calibrate the efforts of a range of stakeholders at national and regional levels, with the very real purpose of protecting our girls and giving back their childhoods.

Ending impunity for violence against women and girls

In November 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened a regional consultation with UN Women and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada to end impunity for violence against women in Asia. The meeting sought ways to strengthen equality laws and improve co-ordination between relevant stakeholders in the Justice sector. The Secretariat enabled the participation of National Human Rights Institutions from Asia and supported their engagement with prosecutors, police, judges and civil society organisations attending the meeting.

Facilitating regional co-operation among National Human Rights Institutions

In November 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat enabled co-operation and co-ordination between African NHRIs by supporting the participation of Commonwealth NHRIs at the biennial conference of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI). The conference focused on the role of NHRIs in ensuring compliance with the UN Framework on Business and Human Rights, strengthening NHRI engagement and effectiveness in this area.

Support to member countries with the Universal Periodic Review process of the Human Rights Council

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a peer review process for reviewing the human rights records of all UN member states under the auspices of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The process provides a constructive entry point with member countries for dialogue and engagement on human rights issues. Since 2008 the Commonwealth Secretariat has supported member countries through pan-Commonwealth training seminars, in-country preparations, national consultations, the review of country reports and post-review interventions.

The Secretariat worked to strengthen the capacities of member governments and institutions to participate in the UPR process, focusing on preparation for the review, technical assistance during the review, and supporting member countries with the sustainable and effective implementation of accepted recommendations.

> We would like to take this opportunity to thank the hard working staff of the OHCHR, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) who have assisted us greatly during our 2nd UPR Review before the Working Group in January this year

Representative of Vanuatu, UNHRC, June 2014

Supporting parliamentarians in engaging with the Universal Periodic Review and implementing its recommendations

Under the UPR process, parliamentarians are regarded as key stakeholders based on their remits of law making and holding the executive to account; however their role is not formalised within the UPR process. The Commonwealth Secretariat organised a series of regional and pan-Commonwealth seminars aimed at building the capacities of parliamentarians to strengthen their role in human rights protection and promotion. These seminars resulted in the establishment of regional Commonwealth Parliamentary Human Rights Groups and the adoption of the Mahé and the Pipitea Declarations for Africa and the Pacific respectively. In the Declarations, parliamentarians committed to a set of practical actions aimed at increasing their engagement in the reporting and implementation process of international and regional human rights mechanisms, including the Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and the UPR. They also undertook to promote inter-parliamentary co-operation aimed at better implementation of UPR recommendations. The regional groups will continue to receive technical assistance to build their capacities to address regional human rights issues such as child, early and forced marriage, equality and non-discrimination, and the impact of climate change; identifying good practices to mainstream human rights in parliaments and strengthen engagement with international, regional and national human rights mechanisms and standards.

The Secretariat has been providing technical assistance to member countries to implement accepted recommendations from the UPR process. This work includes developing national human rights action plans and human rights education of a number of stakeholders that are key to human rights protection and promotion at the national and Commonwealth level.

Seychelles National Action Plan on Human Rights

In Seychelles, technical assistance provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat enabled the development, validation and finalisation of a National Action Plan on Human Rights. The Plan operationalises recommendations from the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. The mid-term report of the Government of Seychelles to the Universal Periodic Review in June 2014 described progress on the Plan.

Integrating human rights education in secondary schools in Mauritius

Human rights education (HRE) is increasingly recognised as a lifelong process that builds knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that contribute towards greater respect for human dignity and a global culture of human rights. Following a request for technical assistance from the Government of Mauritius, the Commonwealth Secretariat developed a project to facilitate the integration of HRE into secondary schools curricula, with a particular focus on children between the ages of 11 and 13. The Secretariat conducted a comprehensive review of existing educational policies, curricula and learning materials. An HRE curriculum and teacher toolkit was developed and then validated in April 2015. The project will be piloted in select secondary schools in Mauritius and thereafter revised and finalised for the 2016 academic year. The curriculum developed in Mauritius will be a model for human rights education in secondary schools, which can be adapted for use by other Commonwealth countries.

Human rights training

Establishing and strengthening National Human Rights Institutions

In 2013/2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat designed and delivered a 'train-the-trainer' human rights education project for youth trainers to develop their capacity to train others in human rights. The project was delivered in partnership with Equitas-International Centre for Human Rights Education in Canada, and resulted in the development of an interactive 'train-the-trainer' manual and the delivery of regional train-the-trainer workshops for youth trainers.

Human rights in prison management

Following training and the development of materials for the human rights education of senior police officials in 2006 to 2008, member countries requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop specific resources for prison managers. The Secretariat consequently developed a separate capacity-building intervention for senior managers of Prisons/Correctional Services and Prison Training Institutions. During the period under review, a regional intervention took place in Africa in February 2013 aimed at reinforcing the importance of and respect for, human rights and human dignity in prisoner care, custody and management.

> Through this training programme, I reaped rich insights on human rights education techniques, especially the participatory approach. I learnt that the participatory approach is appropriate for human rights education and encourages critical reflection on individual beliefs and values. Moreover, I learnt about contrasting and contributing perspectives on human rights declarations, values and beliefs from other participants. Overall, the training programme has enhanced my confidence for handling similar kinds of training for young people.

Joseph Thiyagarajan, from the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development in India, January 2014

Enhancing respect and understanding

The Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding was established in 2005 at the request of Commonwealth Heads of Government. The Commission was tasked with exploring 'initiatives to promote mutual understanding and respect among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth'. The Commission's report of 2007, *Civil Paths to Peace*, outlines values-driven responses to conflict that are rooted in the Commonwealth's collectively agreed principles, including adherence to human rights and the realisation of economic and social justice.

In May 2013, a high-level Commonwealth Roundtable on Reconciliation was convened in London to further the work of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding. The Roundtable included participation from member countries that had initiated promising practices in the area of justice, reconciliation and accountability. The Roundtable provided an opportunity to celebrate Commonwealth success stories and identify transferable knowledge, good practice and workable models. Outcomes included increased awareness among key target countries of best and promising practice in transitional justice processes that encompass accountability, truth-seeking, reparation and institutional reform. A report on the Roundtable and its outcomes was widely disseminated.

On Human Rights Day 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened an expert panel discussion on 'Memorialisation as a mechanism of national reconciliation in the Commonwealth'. Memorialisation provides governments, civil society actors and post-conflict populations a starting point with which to address past human rights violations through non-judicial means, as well as providing lessons learned for future efforts aimed at sustainable reconciliation and guarantees of non-recurrence. This advocacy event offered a forum for member countries to engage constructively on this topic and further pursue the recommendations to promote civil engagement in achieving post-conflict reconciliation outlined in *Civil Paths to Peace*.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes:
Rule of law

- Supported capacity-building for drafting legislation
- Brokered an agreement between Nigeria and Australia to build capacity for prosecuting cross-border economic and financial crime

Promotion, administration and delivery of the rule of law

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided support to strengthen long-term capacity for the effective administration and delivery of the rule of law and justice in member countries.

Strengthening the capacity of the judiciary in Seychelles

With support from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, Seychelles has significantly reduced the backlog of criminal and civil cases, in excess of 70 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. With the containment of piracy at sea, and the increase in number of judges from five to nine, the Supreme Court overall is better able to deal with its current mandate. The enhanced Computerised Case Administration System Seychelles (CCASS) is now hosting the majority of Court registry data, thus reducing the backlog of cases. A 2015 assessment of public perception reports that trust in the judiciary has significantly increased and that respondents have seen positive changes to the Supreme Court since the commencement of improved systems and processes.

Dr Josephine Ojiambo,
Deputy Secretary-General (Political),
Commonwealth Secretariat

While democracy and governance around the Commonwealth take varied forms, we all commit ourselves to certain common values and principles. These shape our collective goals and responsibilities. These include free and fair elections, the protection of human rights, the rule of law, separation of powers, tolerance, and respect and understanding for all. Deep-rooted in the Commonwealth approach are the ideals of peer support and learning from one another

> The rule of law thrives on programmes such as this because legislative drafting is key in the success of our democracy

Supreme Court Justice Joseph Bawa Akamba, Accra, Ghana, October 2013

Drafting legislation

Between 2013 and 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat arranged seminars and workshops that trained more than 150 people from 35 Commonwealth jurisdictions to draft clear, unambiguous legislation. A 12-week programme delivered by the Commonwealth Secretariat and Ghana School of Law provided training to 37 legislative drafters from 16 Commonwealth countries in Africa. The programme covered topics from grammatical style to translating international treaties into national law. Regional seminars in Belize (January 2013), Trinidad and Tobago (February 2013), Grenada (May 2014), Barbados (November 2014), Maldives (June 2015), and Auckland (June 2014) provided training for drafters in Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

In the Caribbean, in addition to the seminars and workshops, drafting experts funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) mentored law graduates from the region through a Commonwealth/CARICOM internship programme as well as through online drafting courses. Technical assistance to the Caribbean also included the production of legislative drafting guidelines and manuals for drafters and policy-makers.

Support from CFTC to the Attorney General's Office in Kenya has enabled the Kenya Law Reform Commission to meet stipulated legislative requirements and deadlines. Phase 3, completed in August 2014, produced more than 40 Constitutional Bills since 2010, including key pieces of legislation such as the Elections Act (2011), Political Parties Act (2011), Transition to Devolved Government Act (2012) and the County Governments Act (2012). These acts have been crucial in building citizen confidence in the constitution and in the democratic process in general.

Drafting laws in-house rather than contracting them out saves Commonwealth members money. In Mozambique, it is common practice for ministries to draft their legislation independently. Following training of legislative drafters by the Secretariat, the Ministry of Justice considered centralising drafting offices in the country. In Rwanda, technical support provided by the Secretariat helped draft guidelines for assessing damage and guidelines for sentencing. The Belize legislative drafting department, established with Secretariat support, drafted 19 out of 29 Acts of the country's substantive new laws in 2013.

Strengthening justice institutions

With support from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation the magistracy in Namibia improved its capacity and systems for dealing with cases. A 2014 review of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Namibian Magistracy Project showed that Commonwealth support had helped to improve systems, strengthen capacity and reduce average processing times and the backlog of cases.

Strengthening the Magistrates Court System of Namibia: results

- More than 300 magistrates trained
- More than 40 new magistrates recruited
- Approximately 200 clerks trained
- New administrative tool-kit and civil and criminal bench books for the Magistrates Offices developed and introduced

Improvement in the performance of some of the Magistrates Offices is clear, with figures taken from across the six court regions showing an overall reduction of the total backlog of cases in the system and the best region (Keetmanshoop) recording a decrease in backlog of nearly 70 per cent.

Building capacity for prosecuting economic and financial crime

Many Commonwealth jurisdictions are under pressure to improve financial transparency to thwart money-laundering by global criminal organisations and prevent terrorist organisations from moving funds to finance their activities. In April 2014, assisted by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of The Bahamas, the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force hosted the first regional anti-money laundering and terrorist financing conference. Ministers and Attorneys-General agreed on the Nassau Affirmation committing members to increase compliance with global standards on financial transparency. The Secretariat also hosted a series of regional capacity-building programmes on the investigations and prosecutions of money laundering and terrorist financing, to ensure the implementation of 'effectiveness' requirements of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards, for judges and Directors of Public Prosecutions in Gaborone, Botswana and Saint Lucia in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The Secretariat drafted and updated model legislation on anti-money laundering, countering the financing of terrorism and recovery of proceeds of crime to reflect the emerging jurisprudence across the world and the 2012 revisions to the FATF global standard Recommendations.

Building capacity in preventing economic and financial crime

An expert recruited by the Commonwealth Secretariat built the capacity of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to develop and roll out training manuals and programmes for local and regional law enforcement agencies in preventing, detecting and prosecuting economic and financial crimes between 2011 and 2013. Following this successful capacity-building activity, the Secretariat brokered an international co-operation agreement between the Major Fraud Squad of the Western Australia Police and the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in December 2013. The Major Fraud Squad and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission shared information and training modules on combating internet fraud and money laundering. Seconded staff from the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission worked with the Major Fraud Squad during 2014 to enhance their professional skills.

Supporting measures against cybercrime

The Commonwealth Secretariat formed a multidisciplinary working group of experts to review the practical implications of cybercrime in the Commonwealth. Estimates put the cost of cybercrime to the global economy at US$2 billion a year. The Secretariat addresses cybercrime through the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative, a consortium of member countries and nearly 40 partner organisations, officially launched in March 2014.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat undertook analyses to identify gaps in combating cybercrime in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, and Dominica – often in partnership with other international organisations including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Organization of American States (OAS). Additionally, agreement was reached on regional needs for East Africa. In the coming year further assessments will be undertaken in three Caribbean member countries.

Support for the work of the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative included developing work plans and providing technical assistance through partner agencies in Ghana and Trinidad and Tobago. Direct technical assistance was provided by the Secretariat to Botswana to update its national cybercrime legislation. Recognising that cybercrime can be a particular challenge for small states the Secretariat has worked to ensure that resources to counter transnational-cybercrime including the Model Law on Computer and Computer related Crime and the Harare Scheme on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters remain international best practice.

Rony James Govinden,
Attorney-General, Seychelles

We do not have a Cybercrime Act. We are a small jurisdiction and cybercrime is a highly technical offence both in terms of drafting the legislation and enforcing the law.

Developing safeguards against criminal use of virtual currencies

Many Commonwealth countries are concerned about the use of innovative new technologies to drive cybercrime globally. A particular threat has emerged from the susceptibility of virtual currencies to criminal use. Under the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative, and in support of commitments made by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2013 to develop safe and cost-effective money transfer operations, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened a two-day Virtual Currencies Round Table in February 2015. The meeting raised awareness about emerging trends in the use of virtual currencies across the Commonwealth. Participants agreed the need for a broad range of legislative reforms to prevent criminals exploiting virtual currencies and asked the Secretariat to undertake research into the prevalence and impact of this new technology on member countries. This work is ongoing.

Promoting the rule of law and development

The links between the rule of law and sustainable development are now well recognised by Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Commonwealth Secretariat played its part in achieving this outcome by supporting rule of law experts from small Commonwealth countries to participate in the post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations in New York in March 2015. The Secretariat worked together with experts from 11 small jurisdictions to communicate the views of small states on implementing and monitoring the rule of law, both in the intergovernmental negotiations and through organising a side event meeting. The Secretariat also contributed to expert working groups on the development of indicators for measuring the rule of law and access to justice as a component of the SDGs.

> The advantage of the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat is that it can enable countries who haven't caught up to get the benefit and knowledge of those who have caught up to develop their systems against cybercrime.

Colin Nicholls QC, Chair,
Commonwealth Group of Experts on Cybercrime

The development of model laws and model legislative provisions is a core strength of the Commonwealth. Our model law on Computer and Computer Related Crime for instance, has influenced the development of cybercrime legislation in most Commonwealth countries and is referenced in leading textbooks on cybercrime.

Katalaina Sapolu,
Director, Rule of Law, Commonwealth Secretariat

Drafting model laws

The Commonwealth Secretariat drafts model laws on thematic areas to assist member countries in enacting new laws or in reforming legislation to comply with international standards, best practices and Commonwealth values. Examples of model laws include the Commonwealth Model Law on Counterterrorism, the Commonwealth Model Law on Prosecution Disclosure Obligations, the Commonwealth Model Legislative Provisions on Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing, Preventive Measures and Proceeds of Crime, the Commonwealth Model Law on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, the Commonwealth Model Law on Computer and Computer Related Crimes, and the Commonwealth Model Law on Integrity in Public Life. Besides model laws, the Secretariat also develops and disseminates tools and best practice guidelines for member countries. The Commonwealth Harare Scheme on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters enhances international co-operation and assistance between member countries on investigation and prosecution of criminal offences. Other schemes include the London Scheme for Extradition within the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Scheme for the Transfer of Offenders.

Enhancing judicial independence

Small jurisdictions often have to cope with particular challenges posed by their small populations, remoteness and resource constraints. Over 30 delegates from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific attended the Meeting of Law Ministers and Attorneys-General of Small Commonwealth Jurisdictions convened by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London in September 2013. In May 2014, Law Ministers at their meeting in Botswana endorsed a paper by the Secretariat on independence of the judiciary and economic development.

The Secretariat organised the first ever Commonwealth Moot Court Competition in June 2014. The initial rounds of the three-day tournament, which simulated the proceedings of the International Criminal Court, took place at the Commonwealth headquarters in London. The United Kingdom Supreme Court hosted the final round. All competitors showed great spirit in making their legal arguments. Three law students from Kenya, Uganda and Zambia were crowned joint winners.

Tsokolo Makhethe,
Attorney-General, Lesotho

At this meeting we have heard how other members have dealt with this problem [backlog of criminal cases].

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: Public administration

- Undertook a diagnostic survey that led to recommendations for the structural reform of the public service in The Bahamas
- Provided two policy frameworks which Sri Lanka piloted, resulting in a commitment to extend reforms across the public service
- Facilitated collaboration between the Administrative Staff College of India and the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration on public policy and governance
- Assisted Tonga to develop and implement an e-governance system to improve public administration
- Arranged technical assistance to help Sierra Leone establish a single treasury account
- Provided technical assistance to Botswana for preparing its next national development strategy
- Developed a model act on Integrity in Public Life for the use of member countries
- A retreat on public administration arranged by the Secretariat in Tuvalu led to each ministry developing a corporate plan for the first time. A similar event in Antigua and Barbuda led to commitments for ministries to develop strategic plans

Improving policy frameworks and public administration

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided technical support to pilot policy frameworks for reforming public service and formulating evidence-based policy. In the area of public administration, the Secretariat provided assistance to improve co-operation between politicians and administrators, to create anti-corruption and public procurement agencies, and to strengthen financial management.

Supporting reforms of central public service institutions

The Government of Sri Lanka pilot tested policy frameworks for outcomes-based policies and performance management provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat to the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The outcomes of the pilots and the commitment of the Public Administration and Industry and Commerce ministries that tested the frameworks, encouraged the government to commit to rolling out the reforms across the public service.

The Secretariat facilitated South-South co-operation between the Administrative Staff College of India and the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration. This led to a review of public policy and governance in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth Secretariat has assisted in establishing a policy unit in the Cabinet Secretariat and is providing a long-term expert in policy development and management. To date, 15 permanent secretaries and 20 senior staff have received training in policy formulation and analysis. The training has enabled at least two ministries to complete their strategic plans. The Secretariat is providing an expert to help strengthen the capacity of public procurement officers dedicated to improving procurement management and addressing current challenges in

planning and cash management. The Secretariat is also assisting the Supreme Audit Institution in the use and implementation of software to facilitate timely execution of audits and the production of reports, and to create a website to publish the reports.

The Bahamas benefited from a diagnostic study on the upgrading and restructuring of its public service. The study identified a number of procedures to strengthen the efficiency and transparency of the public service through the introduction of more advanced processes and technologies. Methods to improve the co-ordination of policy within and between government institutions were also identified. As a result, the Government of The Bahamas will be able to seek assistance from the international community for specific areas of public service reform while the Secretariat will continue to implement other recommendations.

Assisting with e-governance to improve public administration

In 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat completed an e-governance toolkit for Vanuatu. The toolkit will assist the government in delivering services electronically and in modernising its administration. Delegates at the annual Commonwealth African Heads of Public Service Forum requested that the Secretariat develop a similar toolkit for testing in two countries before rolling it out across the continent.

A project managed jointly by the Secretariat and the Tonga Ministry of Justice completed the digitisation of all the birth and death records on the islands of Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u and Eua in December 2013. A British archivist deployed by the Secretariat and funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation shared best practices in making digital copies of paper records of births, deaths, marriages and medical information. The archivist also established archiving policies and trained Registrar General staff in archiving, scanning and tagging documents.

> Continuing rigorous checks, as part of the new system, will leave reliable and robust data that can be used for electoral reform and improved medical record-keeping.

Fiona Bolt,
Archivist, United Kingdom

Strengthening democratic oversight of public finances

Best practice in public financial management standards calls for governments to operate a single treasury account. The Secretariat has supported the Government of Sierra Leone in designing and implementing a roadmap to establish a single treasury account. This has resulted in the identification and consolidation of previously undisclosed bank accounts across ministries, departments and agencies by the Ministry of Finance, and improved cash management by making use of idle resources. The work has reduced the level of short-term borrowing. It is anticipated that the roadmap, once fully implemented, will generate millions of pounds in savings from reduced interest payments.

Networking the public sector

Anti-corruption community of practice in Africa

The Commonwealth Secretariat recognised that it could add value to Commonwealth efforts in anti-corruption by drawing on its convening power to establish a network through which the anti-corruption agencies could learn from and support each other. In 2011 the Secretariat brought together all heads of anti-corruption agencies in Commonwealth Africa. The heads of these agencies established the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa, a community of practice. The network has two aims: first, to promote South-South collaboration and learning by brokering the exchange of ideas and good practices among Commonwealth African countries and, second, to share experience in areas of comparative advantage.

The annual meeting of the heads of anti-corruption agencies acts as a forum for South-South co-operation and peer learning. At the meetings, held in Mauritius in 2013 and in Ghana in 2014, heads peer-reviewed country anti-corruption reports and shared transferable experiences. In May 2015, the meeting was held in Tanzania. The Association facilitated enhanced co-operation that enabled exchanges between counterparts in anti-corruption agencies. A Secretariat-brokered agreement between Ghana and Nigeria for mutual assistance in cross-border criminal investigations led to significant results in West Africa.

Supporting anti-corruption agencies – the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre

The Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with the Government of Botswana and the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa formally established the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre in Gaborone, Botswana, in February 2013. The Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Government of Botswana makes provision for Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation funding of up to £250,000 per year from 2013 to 2017. After 2017, the expectation is that member governments and development partners will fund the Centre.

The Centre is a tangible demonstration of the Secretariat's commitment to support anti-corruption efforts by its members. The establishment of the Centre at the request of members is also a sign that Africa and the wider Commonwealth are committed to rooting out corruption. The Centre provides training, undertakes research and encourages political initiatives on issues such as investigations, public education and prevention, forensics, prosecution and asset tracking. Since its launch in 2013, 150 heads of anti-corruption agencies, department heads, and officers of anti-corruption agencies have benefited from the Centre's innovative professional training and capacity development programmes.

At the behest of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) of Mauritius, the Secretariat provided bespoke practical training to the prosecutors and investigators of the Commission in April 2015. Eighty four participants from ICAC, the police and the Attorney-General's Office attended the three-day programme on investigating and prosecuting corruption related cases.

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided technical assistance to the Government of Botswana for preparing its next national development strategy. The Secretariat's diagnostic study, 'Governance, Safety and Security', made 47 recommendations for the government to consider, covering both immediate reforms and longer-term measures.

Dr Ponatshego H K Kedikilwe MP,
Vice-President of Botswana

Our continent has and is still suffering from the deadly disease of corruption. For us as a Commonwealth, the countries of Africa have a special responsibility to take the fight against corruption to another level... It is imperative that our countries unite to fight this common enemy. No country can singularly fight corruption and succeed. Strength will be found collectively in the prestigious Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre we are gathered here to launch.

Drawing on Commonwealth experiences to support public administration in small states

Following a recommendation from a political administrative retreat convened by the Commonwealth Secretariat in partnership with the Asian Development Bank in 2012, each ministry in Tuvalu drew up a corporate plan aligned with the national strategic plan. The plans clarify the roles of ministers and permanent secretaries and have improved budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. Ministries have a clearer understanding of their roles in realising national development priorities.

Following a decision at the Commonwealth Public Service Ministers Forum in October 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat established a Working Group on Public Administration and Governance. The Working Group developed eight guiding principles to advance public sector reform at its first meeting in November 2014. These guiding principles will be used by member countries to ascertain progress on their public sector reforms and the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Strengthening internal audit

In 2009, the Government of Solomon Islands requested technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat to strengthen their Internal Audit Bureau. The Secretariat arranged for a technical adviser, funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, to support the Internal Audit Bureau. An independent evaluation in 2014 found that the technical assistance had successfully built auditing capabilities and laid sound foundations for sustaining capacity in the future. Training and mentoring established a cadre of around 30 professional internal auditors who meet international auditing standards. As a result, community and public sector recognition of auditors and their role in public financial accountability and anti-corruption has risen.

04 Social Development

Between 2013 and 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat focused efforts in social development on strengthening national frameworks and policies for health and education, advancing gender mainstreaming in the Secretariat's work, and helping member countries to mainstream gender in their policies, frameworks, and programmes. Where the Commonwealth could add value, the Secretariat facilitated capacity-building for social development.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Health**

- Facilitated arrangements between Public Health England and Seychelles and Sierra Leone to strengthen public health laboratories
- Worked with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in Sierra Leone to place a long-term technical consultant to assist Sierra Leone in strengthening its national public health system
- Saint Lucia now has a National Human Resources for Health (HRH) Policy which will guide and influence decisions made by both private and public health sector organisations relating to strategic human resources initiatives and investments to deliver "the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time to save a life and can change a life".
- The Mauritius Ministry of Health and Quality of Life now has a final draft Bill 'Allied Health Professions Bill' along with supporting regulations. This Bill, which has been accepted as the basis for an application to the State Law Office (and thereafter Parliament), will, once enacted, provide for the establishment of a Health Professions Council to oversee the registration and licensure of allied health professionals, regulate their professional conduct and ensure that premises are safe.

Strengthening health policies and systems

The Secretariat provided policy advice and technical support to member countries in order to strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks for health and education. Expertise deployed for analysing policies and developing strategies helped bridge gaps between the formulation and implementation of policies to realise national health and education goals.

In-depth research and analysis of policies commissioned by the Secretariat, and documentation of Commonwealth practices, informed ministerial meetings and related forums. The Secretariat focused particularly on the implications of the Post-2015 Development Agenda for member countries.

As part of the current reforms, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched an electronic hub to facilitate Commonwealth-wide communication on education.

Between 2013 and 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat made significant contributions to global health debates through its convening power and networks, thought leadership and high-level advocacy on issues relevant to member countries.

Strengthening universal health coverage

The theme of the annual Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting in 2015 in Geneva was 'Universal health coverage, with an emphasis on ageing and good health'. The meeting highlighted the centrality of universal health coverage in the Post-2015 Development Agenda while recognising the challenge of an ageing population and the need to promote preventive health care, particularly in the face of increasing non-communicable diseases.

While acknowledging the need for a life-course approach to health care, ministers noted the importance of ensuring the 'unfinished business' of the Millennium Development Goals, such as the need to reduce maternal, new-born and child mortality. Health ministers reviewed presentations from across the Commonwealth on best practices in improving access to quality, affordable health care.

Strengthening public health laboratories

In collaboration with Public Health England, the Commonwealth Secretariat facilitated twinning arrangements and provided technical support to strengthen the capacity of public health laboratories in Seychelles and Sierra Leone. In 2014, Public Health England formally committed to providing both funding and technical expertise. In Sierra Leone, Public Health England assisted with drafting a national public health strategy and improving laboratory systems.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: Education

- South Africa, Mauritius, Swaziland, Botswana, Kenya, Samoa and Maldives piloted the Secretariat's Professional Standards Framework for Teachers and School Leaders. The framework was subsequently adopted by the Caribbean and Pacific Regions and part of the African Region
- Barbados, Ghana, Malaysia, Namibia, Papua New Guinea and Singapore began piloting the School Leaders Capability Framework finalised by the Commonwealth Consortium for Education and the Secretariat
- In partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning, the Secretariat carried out institutional quality reviews of higher education institutions in Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- Kenya, Uganda and Botswana are developing policies based on the Guidelines for Quality Education Provision to Nomadic Communities for Africa and Asia prepared by the Secretariat
- Following Secretariat-commissioned research on boys' underachievement in the Caribbean, Saint Lucia and Jamaica adopted policy recommendations and launched national strategies to tackle the issue. Saint Lucia launched a three-year school mentoring programme for boys in 2014

Strengthening education policies and systems

Education has long been an area in which the Commonwealth makes a distinct contribution. The Commonwealth Secretariat works to ensure that all Commonwealth learners, regardless of social background, benefit from equitable access to good quality education. The Secretariat supports member countries to strengthen their core education policies and systems. Special measures to improve equity address the specific needs of groups marginalised by education systems.

One of the clear advantages of the Secretariat is its connections with ministers and key policy-makers. The Secretariat brings together ministers of Education from diverse countries to learn from each other's experiences and best practices in systematically delivering education to globally mandated criteria. In June 2015, the Secretariat convened the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in The Bahamas, which developed further the recommendations of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education, under the theme 'Quality Education for Equitable Development: Performance, Paths and Productivity – 3 Ps'.

Between 2013 and 2015, the Secretariat contributed to collective Commonwealth efforts to shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda and mapped out the most effective ways of supporting the education of Commonwealth citizens.

Pan-Commonwealth professional standards for teachers and school leaders

In 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat completed the Pan-Commonwealth Framework on Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders, the outcome of a consultative and participatory process involving member countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The framework pulls regional experiences together into a resource that member countries can use to develop national frameworks for professional standards. Based on the framework, Jamaica, Maldives and Samoa developed national professional standards and are putting them into practice. Education ministers in the Caribbean community developed and adopted a Caribbean Framework on Academic and Professional Standards.

Recognising that in some member countries, school leaders have limited opportunities for professional development, the Secretariat developed the School Leaders Capability Framework. Finalised in 2013 in collaboration with the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management, school leaders in Barbados, Ghana, Malaysia, Namibia, Papua New Guinea and Singapore are piloting the framework.

Supporting institutional quality reviews

The Commonwealth Secretariat collaborated with the Commonwealth of Learning to conduct institutional quality reviews requested by the Seychelles National Institute of Health and Social Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Pakistan, and the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, to improve management practices, strengthen internal systems and enhance performance. The National Institute of Health and Social Studies, Seychelles, and Fatima Jinnah Women University, Pakistan, are implementing recommendations of the reviews and the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, is preparing a plan to implement recommendations.

Addressing educational needs of marginalised groups

Quality education for all Commonwealth citizens involves improving access to affordable primary, secondary and tertiary education, especially for girls, women and marginalised groups. Although access to primary education was until recently, improving greatly, there are still some communities that do not have access to education with some member countries experiencing setbacks due to difficulties in reaching the most marginalised communities.

Addressing these common challenges, the Commonwealth Secretariat produced *Guidelines for Quality Education Provision to Nomadic Communities in Africa*. In response, Kenya has set up a National Commission for Nomadic Education. Uganda and Botswana have adopted the guidelines and are implementing policies to provide education to nomadic populations. French-speaking countries have requested a translation of the guidelines.

Addressing underachievement of Caribbean boys

Saint Lucia and Jamaica adopted policy recommendations of a study commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat that examined the reasons for underachievement of boys in the Caribbean. In June 2014, Saint Lucia launched a three-year school mentoring programme for boys.

Creating knowledge sharing hubs

The Commonwealth Secretariat launched an Education Hub at the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in The Bahamas in June 2015. The Hub provides a knowledge-sharing platform for education professionals across the Commonwealth to develop effective policymaking, improve practice and help countries achieve their education goals.

With more than 600 members, the online Community of Practice has access to relevant information and a discussion forum to address topical issues. The aim is to create a collaborative approach to tackling challenges in the education sector by sharing best practice and finding solutions.

The high level of participation in online discussions on issues such as financing quality education and supporting the Sustainable Development Goals show that knowledge and information can be exchanged globally at a minimal cost. Discussions have included input from member countries across four Commonwealth regions. For example, the discussion on the use of information and communications technology in learning prompted contributions from Canada, Saint Lucia, Kenya, Samoa, India, the United Kingdom, Rwanda and Antigua and Barbuda. The Hub also plays an important role in connecting education experts from other key international institutions, such as UNESCO.

Following the success of the Education Hub, the Secretariat is developing a Health Hub, which seeks to provide a similar platform for health professionals in the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Gender equality**

- Produced the publication *Gender-Mainstreaming Guidelines for Project Planning* to assist staff in designing gender responsive projects
- Provided staff with mainstreaming tools and has begun to provide training in gender analysis
- With technical expertise from the Secretariat, South Africa passed a gender bill mainstreaming gender in every institution in the country
- With technical expertise from the Secretariat, Trinidad and Tobago developed gender-responsive budgeting guidelines for institutionalising gender equality and gender-mainstreaming practices in government ministries
- Published four case studies of gender-responsive budgeting in member countries
- The Secretariat report *Gender, Trade and Public Procurement Policy* provided good practice examples from four member countries that have built gender into their procurement processes. Information is being utilised by countries that wish to mainstream gender in procurement processes.
- With technical expertise from the Secretariat, Rwanda revised a procurement bill to strengthen gender equality in procurement systems
- The Commonwealth publication *The Impact of Women's Political Leadership on Democracy and Development: Case Studies from the Commonwealth* assisted the Government of The Bahamas to develop a training package for women leaders aspiring to join politics across the country.
- UN Women translated the Secretariat publication *Gender and Trade Action Guide* into Arabic

Mainstreaming gender equality and empowering women in policy

Between 2013 and 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat, guided by the Commonwealth Gender Equality Policy, took a concerted and systematic approach to mainstreaming gender equality principles and measures. The Secretariat reallocated resources and launched new capacity-building initiatives to mainstream gender so that all Secretariat work takes gender considerations fully into account, whether in its internal structures and processes and policies or in the support provided through its programmes for member countries.

In mainstreaming gender, the Secretariat aims to ensure that women and men benefit equally and to avoid perpetuating current inequalities.

The Secretariat worked closely with governments, international institutions, NGOs and women's organisations to deepen the understanding and implementation of gender-responsive policies, such as gender-responsive budgets, targets for women in political and business leadership and laws to protect women from gender-based violence.

Commonwealth focus areas on empowering women

The Commonwealth Secretariat promoted the economic empowerment of women through programmes addressing economic and financial policies that exclude women, gender-blind procurement and supply chains, and women's lack of participation in economic decision-making. The Secretariat published case studies on gender-responsive budgeting in Australia, Bangladesh, India and Uganda, which highlight effective methods, key issues and challenges in mainstreaming gender. Another report published by the Secretariat on gender, trade and procurement describes how four member countries, Australia, India, Jamaica and Kenya, have mainstreamed gender into procurement processes.

In 2014, the Secretariat began planning, in partnership with the Government of Malta, for the first Commonwealth Women's Forum, which will be held on the eve of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November 2015 in Malta. The theme of the forum is 'Women ahead: be all you can be'. This Forum will serve as a step towards ensuring the Commonwealth's gender commitments remain high on the agenda of leaders.

The Secretariat provided technical expertise to member countries to help empower women and to build frameworks for gender equality. South Africa passed a bill mainstreaming gender in every institution in the country. The Secretariat assisted Rwanda's Ministry for Gender and Family Promotion to mainstream gender into a revised procurement bill as part of reforms in legal and institutional frameworks for public financial management.

Production of the *Commonwealth Illustrative Trends Analysis for the End Term Review of the Plan of Action on Women's Political Participation* resulted in the UK instituting a mechanism for increasing women's leadership following the 10th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (10WAMM) in June 2013. The 10WAMM report outlined key issues and recommendations for the promotion of women's leadership, entrepreneurship and gender equality.

In 2013, the annual consultation of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries was convened under the theme 'Women's Leadership for Democracy and Development'. The meeting enabled Commonwealth members to share and contribute to knowledge on reducing barriers to leadership

across the Commonwealth and yielded strategies to strengthen women's leadership, including institutionalising mechanisms to advance women's political participation. Members also developed Commonwealth gender priorities contributing to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Prior to the meeting, the Secretariat convened a joint session with the African Union's Directorate of Women, Gender and Development, which focuses focusing on women's leadership concerns and promoting government–civil society partnerships for inclusive and sustainable development. Participants at the session acknowledged similar challenges and collective efforts to strengthen women's political and economic development.

The Secretariat commissioned research on the impact of women's political leadership on democracy and development in Rwanda. The research was validated at a multi-stakeholder forum to identify specific mechanisms for universal application across the Commonwealth, and explored the role of Rwanda in advancing the model across the Commonwealth and globally.

In 2013, the Secretariat convened a Women's Business Forum in partnership with the Commonwealth Business Council and Commonwealth Business Women's Network. During the launch of the Commonwealth Business Women's Leadership Group in Sri Lanka, the Secretariat collaborated with the Commonwealth Business Women's Network and set up the Commonwealth Businesswomen Business Xchange Platform on Commonwealth Connects.

In 2013, the Secretariat followed up on 10WAMM and CHOGM with important initiatives on women, business and trade. The Secretariat prepared a policy brief on National Women's Machineries for the CHOGM Business Forum, which was attended by representatives of over 48 Commonwealth countries.

Getting more women onto the boards of corporations is a Commonwealth priority. The Secretariat commissioned a study of women in leadership to establish baseline data on the proportion of women serving in civil services and on state-owned enterprises and corporate boards across the Commonwealth. The Secretariat

developed a roadmap and co-ordinated responses to strengthen women's economic empowerment, also encouraging women across the Commonwealth to join the 'Global Board Ready Women' database initiative. Information briefs were developed and circulated among National Women's Machineries and professional women's networks.

In March 2014, at the Secretariat-facilitated National Women's Machineries meeting, delegates shared case studies on national initiatives. Businesswomen offered practical advice on incorporating gender issues into global value chains and increasing women's access to finance. Before the meeting, the Secretariat arranged a roundtable on gender and procurement. In June 2015 after concluding the baseline research on women in leadership, the Secretariat partnered with the International Labour Organization and UN Women's regional office in Nairobi to hold an advocacy event on increasing women's participation at higher levels of decision-making in the public and private sector.

Prioritising gender in the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat distributed guidelines on how to mainstream gender into project planning to all staff, and further provided training and technical advice for several divisions. Work is ongoing with divisions with the aim that all Secretariat programmes and policies will incorporate clear indicators for progress on gender equality. On the Vacancies section of the Secretariat's website, gender equality is clearly articulated as a core Commonwealth value and links are provided to the Commonwealth Charter and the institutional Gender Equality Policy. Gender equality principles and approaches are included in a number of policies in the new Staff Handbook and in person specifications for Secretariat recruitment.

Building capacity for social development

The Commonwealth Secretariat worked to increase the number of women leaders and their participation in decision-making at all levels of public and political life. The under-representation of women in national and local politics is a serious concern.

Supporting gender-responsive social development

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago asked the Commonwealth Secretariat for assistance in building the capacity of government officials to implement gender-responsive budgeting in ministries. In The Bahamas, the government uses the Secretariat publication, *The Impact of Women's Political Leadership on Democracy and Development* to train prospective women leaders to take part in national elections in 2016. Uganda commissioned a follow-up report, *Making a Difference Beyond Numbers: Towards Women's Substantive Engagement in Political Leadership in Uganda* by civil society organisation Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange.

Supporting women's land rights

The Commonwealth Secretariat prepared Women's Land Rights Handbooks for Cameroon, Kenya and Nigeria. In Cameroon in 2014, the Secretariat worked with the Samaritan House of Empowerment to produce information and radio jingles in local languages to raise awareness of women's land rights. With support from the Secretariat, the Cameroon Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family worked with women judges on a national strategy for legal reform of women's land rights. In Nigeria and Kenya, the Secretariat promoted the handbooks to raise awareness of women's rights and access to justice in partnership with the International Federation of Women Lawyers in Nigeria and Kenya.

> Before the Commonwealth came up with the Cameroon Women's Land Rights Handbook, land law in Cameroon was hitherto nebulous and user-unfriendly as the laws are many and scattered in different texts ... the handbook has proved to be empowering and a trump card for women, elucidating for men, instructive for the traditional rulers, and thought-provoking for policy-makers.

Judge Vera Ngassa,
Cameroon

Ending violence against women

The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to support member countries in efforts to end violence against women. The Secretariat presented a policy paper on violence against women and girls at the 2014 Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in Botswana. Ministers called for the Secretariat to continue supporting member countries to address violence against women and to facilitate co-operation among national law ministries, judiciaries, national women's organisations and other agencies.

In partnership with UN Women and the Government of Canada, the Secretariat convened a consultation on multi-stakeholder co-operation to end impunity for violence against women and girls in Asia. The Secretariat also commissioned an analysis of the law on sexual harassment in India, which was published in the April 2014 issue of the *Commonwealth Law Bulletin*. In Mozambique, the Secretariat supported training for judges and prosecutors in dealing with violence against women in the country's justice system.

05 Youth

The Commonwealth's 53 member countries have a combined population of more than 2 billion, of which more than 60 per cent are under 30 years of age. The Commonwealth sees young people as assets who should be empowered to realise their potential and contribute fully to national development. The Commonwealth therefore seeks to develop, recognise and amplify the role and contribution of 15–29 year-olds in nation-building, and support member governments to do the same.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Youth**

- Launched the world's first *Youth Development Index* in September 2013, measuring youth progress in 170 countries in five domains: health, education, employment, and civic and political participation
- Convened a global Expert Group Meeting on Youth Indicators in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in June 2014, and went on to advocate for strong recognition of young people in the Sustainable Development Goals, including presenting recommendations from Commonwealth Youth Ministers at the United Nations
- The Secretariat and partners held regional workshops in Africa (Kenya, December 2014) and the Caribbean (Barbados, June 2015) to build the expertise of senior officials in evidenced-based youth policy
- Delivered technical assistance for national youth policies, and worked to build the capacity of senior officials in ministries of youth across the Commonwealth in evidence-based youth policies, employment strategies, and other key areas of youth development
- Provided technical assistance to draft a Pacific Youth Employment Strategy, and partnered with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to develop a guide on policies to encourage youth entrepreneurs
- Facilitated availability of the recently developed Bachelor of Youth Development Work as an open education resource for access by universities globally, in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning and the University of the West Indies. This will include a pan-Commonwealth consortium of tertiary institutions, which will deliver and enrich the materials.
- Launched the Commonwealth Youth Council as the official, representative voice of the young people of the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth Students Association. It also strengthened other youth networks focused on climate change and human rights and democracy.
- Supported the development of young entrepreneurs' networks in three regions (Asia, Caribbean and Canada and East Africa), connecting young entrepreneurs in over 25 countries
- The World Conference on Youth, held in Sri Lanka in May 2014, adopted the structure and youth-led approach used by the Secretariat for delivery of the biennial Commonwealth Youth Forum

Advancing the social, political and economic empowerment of young people

Between 2013 and 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat established national and pan-Commonwealth frameworks to empower young people socially, politically and economically. Work included advocating for investment in youth ministries and programmes, and providing technical assistance for developing policies and enabling environments for youth. The Secretariat developed and shared frameworks, guidelines and tools for youth development and launched the world's first Youth Development Index.

Under the new strategy, Sri Lanka and Pakistan provided extra budgetary resources for the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC); Australia, Malaysia and the United Kingdom provided funds for youth projects; and India and the UK supported the Sport for Development and Peace mandate, supplementing the allocation from the Commonwealth Youth Programme fund.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's youth development work is delivered through the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). By working with youth ministries, youth leaders, youth workers and youth development organisations, to develop enabling environments, facilitate connections, build capacity and inspire action, the Commonwealth can effect systemic, sustained and/or catalytic change that will cascade down to have a tangible impact on the lives of young people.

CYP provides technical advice and support for national youth policies; ministry capacity-building; youth enterprise frameworks and advocacy; youth-led networks, forums and projects; and a Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) programme.

> The young citizens of each Commonwealth country are among their most vital assets. Our youth development work is varied, but all focused on the ultimate goal of ensuring that young people are empowered and included at the centre of national development efforts. Only by recognising and investing in young people's talents and energy will Commonwealth countries achieve prosperous and peaceful futures.

Katherine Ellis,
Director, Youth, Commonwealth Secretariat

Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) renewal

In October 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat Board of Governors approved a major renewal of the CYP operational model, to align it with the shift in strategic focus, and establish a modern and more relevant programme. The renewal entailed a reduction in the CYP regional presence, and transfer of the operation of the CYP Centre facilities to national entities. It also entailed a larger, centralised team to allow more strategic and cohesive pan-Commonwealth programming, and sharing of innovation and good practice between countries and regions. The new structure includes research and policy roles to focus on thought leadership in youth development, and a dedicated team focused on sport for development and peace.

In addition, in October 2014, the Secretariat launched the Young Professionals Programme as part of its ongoing commitment to youth development and empowerment, and to ensure youth perspectives are included in the work of the Secretariat in a meaningful and consistent way. A total of 27 roles were created across the Secretariat, including eight in the CYP, with each Young Professional being appointed into a substantive job on a two-year paid contract, with a special professional development programme along with on-the-job training. The initiative brings the technical expertise, innovation, energy and perspectives of young professionals from across the Commonwealth into the Secretariat's core work, at the same time as creating exciting development opportunities for talented and qualified young people.

Strengthening evidence-based youth policy

In September 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched the first global Youth Development Index (YDI), which tracks progress in youth development across five domains in 170 countries. An expansion project is now underway, and will include development of a methodology and toolkit to assist member governments to build on the global YDI to create national and sub-national level YDIs.

In June 2014, the Secretariat, in partnership with UN agencies, led a meeting of global experts on youth indicators and targets for monitoring Sustainable Development Goals.

Following that, in December 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Division for Social Policy and Development, UN Habitat and UNESCO held a technical workshop, on 'Evidence-based Policies on Youth Development in Sub-Saharan Africa', in Nairobi, Kenya. A similar regional workshop was delivered for the Caribbean region in Barbados in June 2015, and others are planned for the Pacific and Asia. The workshop strengthens the capacity of participants from government ministries, public institutions, and civil society and youth-led organisations to formulate, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies on youth using quantitative approaches and localisation of internationally agreed indicators. The Secretariat convened the Africa Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in February 2015, hosted by the Government of Cameroon, and the Caribbean Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in April 2015, hosted by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. Ministers, senior officials and youth leaders worked together on recommendations and commitments to create environments that enable young people to realise their social, economic and political potential.

The Secretariat provided national-level support for the development of national youth policies in Bangladesh in 2014 and Guyana in 2013.

In 2013 the Secretariat established a Commonwealth Youth Policy Group to promote collaboration among organisations based in London working with and for young people across the Commonwealth.

Associate Professor Robyn Broadbent,
Victoria University, Australia

The index will impact on policy and practice and also tell us a little about how young people are doing, which is really important for long-term economic growth, health and population development.

Development of policies for youth employment and entrepreneurs

With global youth unemployment continuing as a major issue, the Commonwealth Secretariat directed attention to the importance of youth-focused national policies that create employment, promote entrepreneurships, develop job skills, and integrate gender and youth rights issues in national development plans.

The Secretariat took a range of approaches, such as providing technical assistance to member governments, establishing and supporting networks of youth entrepreneurs, and collaborating with international agencies and experts.

To support Pacific islands in their efforts to address youth unemployment, the Secretariat partnered with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in January 2014 to deliver a workshop to strengthen the capacity of senior officials in ministries of youth and labour in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The workshop provided technical skills and tools to the senior officials to help them develop and implement youth employment strategies in their countries.

As a result of this workshop five of these countries have developed, or are in the process of developing their national youth employment strategies. The workshop also provided an opportunity for the officials to contribute to a draft Pacific Youth Employment Strategy, developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the ILO. The Strategy is a key part of the Pacific Youth Development Framework that has been developed in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and other youth stakeholders in the region.

During 2013 to 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat continued to support the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAYE) – Asia. Launched in 2011, CAYE – Asia brings together networks of young entrepreneurs and the organisations that support them in nine member countries. The success of the model resulted in the establishment of two similar alliances in the Caribbean and Canada and East Africa, soon to be followed in other regions. CAYE – Asia reaches around 20,000 young entrepreneurs, who between them created 31,800 new jobs in 2013. It also

> The Young Entrepreneurs Association of Jamaica is very excited about this great initiative. We look forward to many years of successfully connecting young people to business and advocating for them across the Caribbean region and Canada.

Erica Wynter, President, Young Entrepreneurs Association, Jamaica, at the launch of Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs – Caribbean and Canada

presented the united voice of young entrepreneurs at the Commonwealth Business Forum at CHOGM in 2013, and Commonwealth Ministers Meetings (Youth and Education) in 2013 and 2015.

In collaboration with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Commonwealth Secretariat developed a *Policy Guide for Youth Entrepreneurship*. The guide, for policy-makers, and intergovernmental and international organisations, NGOs and development agencies, sets out policies to support young entrepreneurs. At the Africa Region and Caribbean Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings in February and April 2015 respectively, ministers noted the guide and the need for the Secretariat to help with technical assistance to develop recommended policies.

The Secretariat also commissioned research on the economic disenfranchisement of young people and its association with crime, violence and conflict. In November 2013, the Secretariat presented the recommendations of the research at the SPARK Conference on 'Youth Entrepreneurship Development in Conflict Affected Environments'.

Advocating for a Post-2015 Global Development Agenda for youth

The Commonwealth Secretariat conducted and supported high profile advocacy for including youth empowerment and participation in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretariat's social media campaign – #yes2youthgoal – reached 172,000 people across the globe. The campaign slogan, 'Youth-less development is useless development', put young people at the heart of the development agenda. The final agreed goals included a statement about providing "...youth with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities, helping our countries to reap the demographic dividend..."

> The stories that were spawned [in this manual] are those that can really lend learning and insight to other people to create empowering youth spaces

Arjun Shekhar,
Pravah Board President, New Delhi, India

Promoting professional youth work

For over 40 years, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) has been a global leader in promoting youth work as a skilled and vital profession. In recent years, the Commonwealth Secretariat supported the University of the West Indies to upgrade the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Development Work to a Bachelor of Youth Development Work, and has now facilitated availability of the degree programme as an open education resource for access by universities globally. The initiative, a partnership between the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning, and the University of the West Indies, will include a pan-Commonwealth consortium of tertiary institutions that will deliver and enrich the materials.

In December 2014, the Secretariat launched *Co-Creating Youth Spaces: A Practice Based Guide for Youth Facilitators*, a manual to help youth professionals, in collaboration with adolescents and young adults, develop youth clubs that enhance active participation in society and improve leadership skills and understanding of social issues. In developing the guide, the outcome of extensive field research in India, the Secretariat partnered with two Indian youth organisations, Pravah and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan.

The Secretariat, in partnership with the UK National Youth Agency, organised the annual Commonwealth Youth Work Week in 2013 and 2014. Youth Work Week and the Commonwealth Youth Worker Awards, both supported by the Secretariat, celebrate youth work professionals who have played a pivotal role in the development of young people and showcase inspirational youth workers from across the Commonwealth.

Empowering youth to participate

By deepening the capacity of Commonwealth young leaders, and supporting them to access decision-makers, the Commonwealth Secretariat is playing a valuable role in ensuring young people can contribute to policy debates and drive action on climate change and other development issues.

Between 2013 and 2015, the Secretariat provided technical assistance and support to national, regional and pan-Commonwealth youth networks to connect and empower young people, and amplify their voices on economic, political and social development. The Secretariat also supported the attendance of Commonwealth young people at key regional and global events, such as the World Conference on Youth in Sri Lanka in May 2014, the UN Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa in September 2014, and the first UN Global Forum on Youth Policies in Azerbaijan in January 2015.

Supporting Commonwealth youth networks and platforms

The Commonwealth Secretariat places special emphasis on supporting young people to design and drive youth-led initiatives, and to have a meaningful voice alongside decision-makers. During 2013 to 2015, the Secretariat supported Youth Leaders Forums at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka in 2013, regional Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings in Africa and the Caribbean, and the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in The Bahamas in 2015.

The World Conference on Youth held in Sri Lanka in May 2014 adopted the structure and youth-led approach developed by the Secretariat for delivery of the biennial Commonwealth Youth Forum. Senior officials of the UN and other agencies remarked that the conference 'gave young people a true voice in organisation and deliberations [of such a conference] for the first time ever'. The Secretariat also helped support the attendance of young people at the meeting, and organised a side-event on youth in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Secretariat was instrumental in setting up the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), which was launched in November 2013 with the election of the first Executive at the Commonwealth Youth Forum in Sri Lanka. An autonomous body representing the 1.2 billion young people of the Commonwealth, and comprising representatives from national youth councils and groups, the CYC promotes and

Ahmed Adamu,
Chairperson, Commonwealth Youth Council

> Too many young lives have been lost before, during and after general elections in Nigeria – yet this is not a problem unique to this country. This [Commonwealth Youth Council] youth-led campaign aims to sensitise young people on the need to be tolerant and embrace peace during elections.

facilitates youth voice and youth-led development. The Commonwealth Youth Council initiated its first campaign, against election violence, in Abuja, Nigeria, in February 2014, and has played a key role in bringing youth voices to global high level policy events.

The Secretariat supported the creation of the Caribbean Regional Youth Council and Commonwealth Students Association, new networks to engage, unify and amplify youth voices and frame youth-led action. The Commonwealth Students Association played a key role in delivering the Youth Forum of the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in The Bahamas in June 2015, which delivered a number of education policy recommendations to ministers.

The Secretariat continued to support the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN). In June 2014, with assistance from the Secretariat, the CYCN convened a Youth Expert Group Meeting on Climate Change, which developed recommendations for Heads of Government ahead of CHOGM and the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP 21) in late 2015. In September 2014, the CYCN contributed to the UN's Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth appointed the Pacific Co-ordinator of the CYCN as the Global Focal Point for Small Island Developing States from 2014–2016.

The Secretariat also continued to support the Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network, and contributed to the launch event of the Royal Commonwealth Society's Commonwealth Youth Gender and Equality Network.

Recognising the great contribution of young people

The annual Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work recognise inspiring young people whose development work has had a significant impact on people and communities in their country or region. The Commonwealth Secretariat delivers this awards programme annually, and in 2015, recognised regional winners from Pakistan, Samoa, Tanzania and Trinidad and Tobago. The awards play an important role in showcasing to policy-makers young people's outstanding abilities and contributions to development.

Pan-Commonwealth Youth Award for Excellence in Development

The winner of the pan-Commonwealth Award for 2015 was 25-year-old Julius Shirima from the United Republic of Tanzania. He founded a youth entrepreneurship organisation and micro-venture company while still in high school. Darecha, his company, enables young Tanzanian entrepreneurs to transform their business ideas into profitable ventures, which in turn has provided employment to thousands of young people in Tanzania. Young people in other countries have adopted the business model developed by him. He is now contributing to the establishment of CAYE-East Africa.

'Bright Ideas from a Young Commonwealth' was launched during Commonwealth Week 2015 as a video initiative for young people to share their great work to decision-makers and other young people. A toolkit was developed to support organisations to deliver similar events.

Julius Shirima,
2015 Commonwealth Youth Award Winner

> Winning the pan-Commonwealth Youth Award confirms...we should continue with the work we are doing because it is having a positive impact on young people's lives. ... The outlook of the other finalists has also taught me a lot. All of [these] young people... are united by the drive to improve our communities.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)**

- Convened the 2014 Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting in Glasgow
- Supported SDP projects in Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Barbados to develop national strategies and action plans for the intentional use of sport for development and peace
- Published a collection of papers in 2014, commissioned jointly with the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport, showcasing innovative approaches and examples of effective Sport for Development and Peace policies and strategies
- Established the Commonwealth Youth SDP Working Group, a group of young practitioners and advocates, who in turn launched a Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit

Harnessing Sport for Development and Peace

In the period 2013 to 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) programme promoted sport as a positive tool for human development and community cohesion. The Secretariat undertook policy analysis and capacity-building, convened meetings and events for sharing innovations and best practices, and provided technical assistance on the development of national strategies.

In the run-up to the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the Secretariat convened the biennial Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting in Glasgow. At the meeting, ministers signed bilateral sports agreements facilitated by the Secretariat between Jamaica and South Africa, and India and Lesotho. The India-Lesotho agreement provides 40 scholarships for Lesotho students in sports science, management and journalism; supports the establishment of a high-altitude training centre and sports academy; and, helps Lesotho develop physical education programmes.

With support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Governments of Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Barbados developed national strategies and action plans for using sport as a development tool, using *The Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport* and associated workbook. The guide sets out ways for member governments to contribute to the education, employment, health, gender equity and safety of children and young people through sport. Sri Lanka noted the impact that sport has played in sustaining peace and supporting reconciliation in former conflict areas. In Rwanda, sport improved health and helped prevent non-communicable diseases. The pilot projects demonstrate the value of the Secretariat's promotion of multi-sectoral collaboration in sport to advance development and peace.

> Sport is becoming a signature achievement of the Commonwealth...contributing to the Commonwealth goals of development, democracy and diversity through Commonwealth partnerships in development through sport.

Bruce Kidd,
former Chair, Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport

In 2014, the Secretariat published a collection of papers *Strengthening Sport for Development and Peace: National Policies and Strategies* jointly with the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS). These showcased innovative approaches and examples of effective Sport for Development and Peace policies and strategies.

The Secretariat established the Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group in May 2013 to raise the voice of youth in sport. The Group, comprised ten young people working in the field of sport for development and peace, advocates for young people to have a say in the decisions made by governments and sporting organisations. They also developed and launched a *Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit* to assist young people in championing SDP.

The Secretariat continued to provide support for CABOS in 2013 to 2015, including annual meetings in July 2014 in Glasgow and June 2015 in Trinidad and Tobago. CABOS is also undertaking a key piece of work on developing a Commonwealth consensus on integrity in sport.

Commonwealth Secretariat events to mark International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, on 6 April 2015, included a roundtable expert group meeting to develop guidance for member governments on using sport to deliver the Post-2015 Development Agenda and goals. This work has continued through consultations with governments, regional and global sporting bodies, and other key stakeholders.

Thesele Maseribane,
Minister of Gender and Youth, Sport and Recreation, Lesotho

> The most important thing that we have in the [bilateral agreement with India] is to introduce physical education ... To lower the health budgets in our countries, we have to use sports. To make peace in our countries, we have to use sports. To fight HIV and AIDS, we have to use sports ... to send out messages.

06 Development: Pan-Commonwealth

Commonwealth members face complex challenges in achieving sustainable economic development. Many small states and developing countries continue to struggle with declining global trade and investment. The lack of information for investors and trading partners, and limited capacity to harness opportunities for growth compounds these difficulties.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Statement on the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda, September 2014

The new agenda must tackle the causes of poverty, exclusion and inequality. We acknowledge the importance of sustainable development for all individuals, and have committed ourselves to eliminate disparities and make growth more inclusive for all, including women and girls, youth, vulnerable groups and people with disabilities.

Advancing Commonwealth principles and values in global development and financing decisions

The Commonwealth Secretariat examines the international frameworks of key players who set the rules, and articulates the changes Commonwealth member countries seek to bring about. Discussions among Commonwealth Ministers and small states facilitated by the Secretariat identify issues and concerns and set priorities for global advocacy.

Building on longstanding areas of expertise and established relationships with member countries, regional bodies and other partners, the Secretariat engaged with emerging issues in regional trade integration and economic co-operation that affect Commonwealth developing countries. Timely, relevant, high-quality economic research, analysis and technical support provided by the Secretariat helped member countries frame national economic goals and strategies.

When requested, the Secretariat advised countries, provided tools and built capacity for debt management and managing marine and natural resources.

Post-2015 Global Development Agenda

The Commonwealth Secretariat made policy contributions to the G20 Working Group on Development and facilitated discussions and developed collective Commonwealth stances on the Post-2015 Global Development Agenda.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's current strategic plan emphasises working in close collaboration with partner organisations across a range of activities. By strategically partnering with likeminded bodies, the Commonwealth's collective effort will have greater impact in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the reporting period, the Secretariat actively advocated for Commonwealth principles and values in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, in particular regarding the practicalities of turning ambition into reality.

The Secretariat provided technical inputs to Commonwealth UN representatives engaged in setting the agenda on education and youth. With assistance from the Secretariat, Commonwealth Heads of Governments, through the Chair of the Commonwealth, tabled a Commonwealth Statement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda at the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. The statement reflected the Commonwealth's values as articulated in the Charter of the Commonwealth and stressed that the new development agenda should strive to 'leave no-one behind'.

> [the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group] has been very influential in setting the agenda...
>
> **Olav Seim,** Director of Education For All Global Partnerships Team, UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) statement for the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and the report of the Global Consultation that informed the UN High Level Panel adopted recommendations for the Post-2015 Development Framework for education developed by the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group with support from the Secretariat.

> [the Commonwealth's proposal] is the most significant position that has been advanced so far. We should ensure that we do not end up having something that is less than this proposal for a global education goal.
>
> **Hugh McLean,**
> **Director, Education Program, Open Society Foundations**

Concerted advocacy by the Secretariat and partners such as the United Nations Population Fund, the Commonwealth Youth Council and youth-focused NGOs saw more emphasis on youth in the final draft of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. The Commonwealth Youth Council campaign #yes2youthgoal reached 172,000 people through social media. The Youth Development Index, developed by the Secretariat, stimulated discussion among member countries on data and monitoring targets related to youth.

Commonwealth member countries both offer and accept aid. This means that the Commonwealth has a profound interest in the financing of the post-2015 goals. The Secretariat facilitated discussions to explore financing at the 2014 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting. Technical briefings prepared by the Secretariat informed Commonwealth UN representatives preparing for the UN's Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015.

The world of development financing is rapidly changing. The Secretariat has been at the forefront of efforts to develop understanding of, and access to, innovative sources of finance. In pursuit of this aim, in 2014, the Secretariat published a toolkit on innovative sources of development finance. The toolkit compiles sources of innovative finance, considers their predictability and sustainability, their benefit to the poorest, timeframes for disbursement and provides links to official development assistance.

> **Mauricio Hurtado,**
> **Co-chair, United Nations Leading Group on Innovative Finance**
>
> This [toolkit on innovative sources of development finance] is a practical guide that will stimulate debate and promote sharing of ideas and experiences on this very important topic. It is an enormously useful and welcome contribution by the Commonwealth.

Inclusive economic growth and sustainable development

Between 2013 and 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat continued to strengthen policies and systems that build resilience and support inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. In this regard the Secretariat assisted several countries with resilience profiling and developed policies and strategies for Mauritius, Anguilla, African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, South Africa and Kenya.

The Secretariat provided support to strengthen debt management systems in Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Barbados, Malta, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica.

The Secretariat provided legal, economic and technical assistance for negotiating maritime boundaries and lodging claims for continental shelf territory. The Secretariat assisted Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean region, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu in the Pacific region, and Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius and Seychelles in the African region.

The Secretariat also provided assistance to a number of member countries including Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, St Kitts and Nevis, Mauritius, Seychelles and Vanuatu concerning the development of regional and national ocean policies and aspects of the 'blue economy'.

The Secretariat provided legal, economic and technical assistance to The Bahamas, Jamaica, Kiribati, Guyana, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Seychelles and Swaziland concerning the management of natural resources, particularly extractive industries.

Support from the Secretariat enabled Saint Lucia to develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy.

> Sustainable development must focus on addressing key economic, social and environmental challenges. The Commonwealth Secretariat is providing strategic support to member countries by strengthening their resilience to cope with current and emerging challenges, including climate change; and improving access to resources in achieving their development outcomes

Dr Denny Lewis-Bynoe, Director, a.i.,
Economic Policy Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Implementation
International
Regulation

Effective frameworks for inclusive economic growth, and social and sustainable development

The Commonwealth Secretariat's support from 2013 to 2015 included facilitating trade and trade negotiations, and providing assistance to strengthen the competitiveness of exports and develop enterprises. Support included placing experts in national and regional bodies, engaging with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other regional organisations, and developing and disseminating publications and tools to help member countries understand and own the processes involved. The Secretariat backstopped member countries participating in WTO and other trade negotiations to strengthen their participation in the global trading system.

The Secretariat has long championed a rules-based multilateral trading system as one of the most important ways to achieve development and economic growth for the poorest, smallest, and most vulnerable countries. In November 2013, ahead of the WTO negotiations in Bali in December, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting agreed the *Kotte Statement on International Trade and Investment*. The Kotte Statement reaffirmed members 'commitment to a rules-based, transparent free, and fair multilateral trading system that enhances our trade liberalisation and developmental objectives, while taking into account the special requirements of small and vulnerable economies and least developed countries'.

The Secretariat organised consultative meetings and workshops in London, Geneva, and South-East Asia to support preparations for the WTO negotiations in Bali in December 2013. It commissioned analyses to inform its member countries of strategic options in the negotiations, ways to enhance their participation in the multilateral trading system and prepare for future challenges related to trade. The negotiations led to the Bali Package, including a Trade Facilitation Agreement, a breakthrough that will increase global trade and enable the Secretariat to do more for its members in this particular area. The Agreement promises to boost global trade by at least US$400 billion by cutting red tape and simplifying customs' checks. Commonwealth members that are either land-locked or island nations, and are already constrained by high transportation costs stand to gain from this Agreement. Further, the Bali Package takes up Commonwealth policy recommendations prepared by the Secretariat on expanding duty-free and quota-free access discussed by the WTO in December 2011. The Secretariat continued its effort towards supporting members in these multilateral negotiations. Ahead of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in December 2015, preparatory meetings have been organised in South Asia and Africa. Other Commonwealth regions will be covered as well.

The Secretariat undertook analytical and advocacy work to support and promote regional integration in the Commonwealth. It also looked at the implications of the shifting global trading landscape for the Commonwealth.

The second phase of the Hub and Spokes programme built on the successes of the first phase, 2004–2012, that trained over 34,000 people in public and non-government sectors in trade policy. The Commonwealth partners with the European Union, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie in implementing this programme which has been extended to 31 December 2016. The Commonwealth is responsible for East and Southern Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific regions, and manages a network of seven regional trade advisers and 22 trade advisers. Under the programme, trade advisers – the 'spokes' – strengthen the capacity of government ministries and regional organisations, while regional trade advisers – 'hubs' – provide similar technical assistance to key regional and national organisations.

The technical advice and support provided by the advisers has had a clear impact on national and regional trade policy of the ACP countries and regions covered by the programme. A snapshot of some of their interventions is provided below.

Dr Mohammad Razzaque,
Director, a.i., Trade Division,
Commonweath Secretariat

The Commonwealth is helping its member countries to achieve effective participation in global trade. Our trade policy analysis and global advocacy work is aimed at promoting the interest of developing members particularly the least developed countries, small states and Sub-Saharan Africa. We are also implementing country-specific projects in at least 15 member countries to promote their competitiveness. Furthermore, via the Hub and Spokes II Programme, a partnership programme with the European Union, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and the ACP Secretariat, we are supporting member countries, through our 29 Regional and National Trade Advisers, in trade policy and negotiation matters.

> [the Hubs and Spokes programme has been] instrumental in supporting the Pacific ACP region's engagement in Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations.
>
> **Andie Fong Toy,**
> **Deputy Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat**

Commonwealth trade advisers deployed in the Pacific region supported countries to benefit from enhanced regional trade and economic integration. Their support was critical to the trade negotiations processes – the advisers were actively engaged in providing technical and advocacy support to the PACP–EU EPA negotiations. They also supported the region with negotiating briefs, documents and other materials relating to the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations – Plus (PACER-Plus) and PICTA agreements.

In Africa, the advisers were actively involved in assisting with negotiations on a range of trade relations/agreements, including the Continental Free Trade Agreement and the tripartite agreement between COMESA–SADC–EAC. The advisers provided technical input and advice, developed policy papers, briefing notes and data analysis to inform and support trade negotiators in the negotiations of these agreements. The African Union Assembly launched the Continental Free Trade Area negotiations during the 25th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Governments in June 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided technical assistance to Mauritius to establish a 'Look Africa' policy and strategy to facilitate Mauritian export and investment within Africa. The policy leverages Mauritius as the location of choice for international companies doing business in the region.

The senior trade adviser deployed by the Secretariat to Seychelles made significant contributions to finalising bilateral agreements with nine countries on market access. Assistance to the Ministry of Trade helped Seychelles comply with the requirements for accession to the WTO. The Seychelles Parliament passed all acts for complying with WTO requirements, the Bureau of Standards Act, Industrial Property Act, Copyright Act, Food Act, Animal and Plant Biosecurity Act and Customs Act. The Secretariat provided support for negotiations towards accession, completed in December 2014 and for developing the regulations required by accession.

In 2014, the Secretariat reviewed Kenya's 2008 export strategy for non-tourism services. The review found that Kenya had implemented nearly two-thirds of the recommendations. Kenya had extended Export Processing Zone incentives previously limited to the manufacturing sector to services and enacted legislation and reforms in regulation, product development and marketing to build the profile of the Nairobi Stock Exchange. The Secretariat is supporting Kenya's Trade Support Institutions to facilitate exports of selected services to the region and to institutionalise dialogue in order to improve policy and competitiveness in the sector.

Supporting competitive strategies in Kenya

In May 2014, the Government of Kenya launched Kenya TradeNet, an electronic data system developed in a South-South collaboration with Singapore, building on a framework initiated by the Commonwealth Secretariat. TradeNet overcomes impediments to trade between Kenya and other East African countries and positions Kenya as a key trading hub in Africa. The average time to clear goods at Port Mombasa fell from 10 days to two days, lessening the burden on traders and agencies involved in customs clearance.

The Secretariat also provided support to Kenya for institutionalising the International Road Transport Convention. Reducing the time goods are in transit encourages exports beyond the East African Community Single Customs Territory and will encourage trade in the region.

Work by the Secretariat catalysed interest from donors such as the World Bank and the World Customs Organization in supporting trade and transport infrastructure in Kenya.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Debt management**

- Developed and released a new version (version 2) of the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS–DRMS)
- Trained over 100 debt managers in the Caribbean, Southern and East Africa, South Pacific and Asia regions on the new version of the CS–DRMS
- Initiated a project to redesign and redevelop the CS–DRMS to take advantage of state-of-the-art technologies and to incorporate more advanced debt management functions in the interest of more than 40 member countries

Strengthening national frameworks for debt management

When requested by member countries, the Commonwealth Secretariat provides assistance to strengthen sovereign debt management. Currently the Secretariat assists 40 member countries to strengthen sovereign debt management through appropriate policy frameworks, institutional arrangements and capacity-building. Between 2013 and 2015, the Secretariat provided assistance for developing sound debt management policies, strategies and operations. This assistance supported governments to manage various types of debt more effectively and to evaluate the effects of new borrowings and market variables on sovereign debt. Between 2013 and 2015, assistance facilitated by the Secretariat strengthened national institutions and led to changes in policies.

The Secretariat released version 2.0 of the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS–DRMS). A wide range of enhancements in the new version empowers debt managers to better manage the risks of their portfolios and monitor their debt flows and stocks with more rigour. Over 100 agencies, ministries of finance, treasuries and central banks in more than 60 countries, 15 outside the Commonwealth, use the system. The debt management system, which manages a global portfolio of more than US$2.5 trillion of public debt, is part of the Secretariat's debt management programme. Other elements of the programme include advocacy, policy advice, support with formulating debt management strategies and capacity-building.

Pamella McLaren, Head and Adviser, Debt Management Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth remains committed to providing policy advice to member countries on public debt management, supporting countries to make effective use of the Secretariat's suite of software solutions to manage their country's debt portfolio, and ensuring that countries have regular enhancements of the software to stay in tune with the latest developments in debt management.

The Secretariat developed a pool of debt experts to assist countries to migrate to the new version of the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System and make effective use of the software. In this context, 20 debt managers from around the Commonwealth took part in a training-of-trainers workshop in January 2015, organised by the Secretariat in London.

The redevelopment of the CS–DRMS is well on track. In line with industry trends, the Secretariat outsourced redevelopment to an established software development company. The Secretariat will manage software maintenance in-house. Redevelopment will preserve past investment, extend the useful life of the software and maintain the comparative advantage of the Secretariat as a global provider of cutting-edge debt management solutions.

In October 2013, the Secretariat and the South African National Treasury signed a landmark agreement. The unique partnership facilitates practical South–South collaboration within and across the Commonwealth family.

The Secretariat provided Malta with policy advice to finalise a comprehensive draft Public Debt Management Act to strengthen the governance framework for debt management. In June 2014, the Secretariat and the Government of Malta signed an agreement to enhance the capacity of small states to record, analyse and manage their debt.

The initiative will see the Treasury Department of Malta supporting the Secretariat's Debt Management Programme to provide policy advice and capacity building to Commonwealth small states, sharing the country's best practices in the area. Many of the small states are currently facing significant debt management challenges with the growing burden of debt. This initiative will pave the way for a focused approach to deal with the specific challenges of small states.

Commonwealth Secretariat policy advice assisted Jamaica to strengthen capacity to manage debt. The policy, institutional and legal reforms put in place by the Ministry of Finance and public service 2010–2015 following advice from the Secretariat on the reform of the Debt Management Framework improved the debt structure in terms of currency, interest rates and mix of maturities. Jamaica instituted improved debt management governance and institutional capacity-building developed professional expertise. Jamaica is a role model for reform of debt management in indebted Caribbean countries.

The Secretariat provided policy advice on the development of the domestic bond market to a number of countries including Swaziland (2011), Sierra Leone (2012), Sri Lanka (2013), Tonga and The Bahamas (2014). Following the policy advice, the Government of Swaziland restored access to domestic finance after a gap of nearly two years in August 2013. In Sri Lanka, efficiency of the bond market improved following the implementation of a number of reform measures recommended by the Secretariat. The country is making steady progress towards implementing the remaining recommendations including setting up a Central Counterparty arrangement and a full scale trading platform. Tonga and The Bahamas are in the process of implementing the recommendations of the Secretariat for the development of the bond market. In 2014, the Government of Botswana was assisted with policy advice on the formulation of a medium-term debt management strategy to guide its borrowing decisions on cost and risk considerations.

Horizon is an innovative software tool for managing sovereign debt successfully piloted by the National Treasury of South Africa. A risk management and planning tool, Horizon allows public debt managers to formulate and implement a debt management strategy within a cost-risk management framework. The Secretariat plans to deploy the system in several countries across the Commonwealth.

The Secretariat convened the third Commonwealth stakeholders' conference on public debt management, 'Public Debt Management in an Uncertain Era', in June 2015 in Johannesburg. The conference brought together participants from more than 35 countries. Eminent speakers discussed lessons from the financial crisis. Following the conference, a meeting of the CS–DRMS User Group reviewed and discussed future directions of the Secretariat's debt management programme.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Maritime boundaries, ocean governance and natural resources**

- Responded to requests for legal, technical and policy advice and assistance relating to sustainable development of natural resources from 20 member countries
- Provided assistance that settled 12 maritime boundaries throughout the Commonwealth during the period 2013–2015
- Provided assistance to enable member countries to lodge claims with the United Nations for large areas of extended continental shelf resulting in successful claims by Ghana, Mauritius and Seychelles
- Provided assistance to several member countries to reform and modernise national policies, laws and fiscal regimes relating to oil and gas, renewables, energy and mining activity
- Developed a regional oceans policy for the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States that harmonises national ocean policies and laws
- Assisted several member countries to develop national ocean policies and governance frameworks to support the development of the 'blue economy'

Enhancing ocean governance and supporting effective and sustainable management of natural resources

Between 2013 and 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat assisted over 20 member countries to establish maritime zones and boundaries, establish more effective ocean governance regimes, develop the blue economy and manage natural resources.

Assistance provided by the Secretariat helped member countries to conclude maritime boundary treaties, lodge successful claims for jurisdiction over areas of extended continental shelf and prepare regional and national ocean policies. The Secretariat provided assistance to reform and modernise national laws, policies and fiscal regimes relating to the exploration and development of natural resources, particularly extractive industries.

Assistance provided by the Secretariat for delimiting maritime boundaries resulted in member countries settling 12 maritime boundaries, including boundaries of the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Mauritius, Nauru and Seychelles, and successful claims for areas of continental shelf by Mauritius, Seychelles and Ghana.

With support from the Secretariat, Seychelles and Mauritius signed a joint management agreement for an area of shared continental shelf covering over 400,000 square kilometres.

The Secretariat provided legal, economic and technical assistance to The Bahamas, Jamaica, Kiribati, Guyana, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Seychelles and Swaziland concerning the management of natural resources. This assistance related to reform and modernisation of national laws, policies and fiscal regimes for managing oil, gas and mining. The Secretariat also provided direct support to countries engaged in negotiations with potential investors in oil, gas and mineral exploration and development in Mauritius, Pakistan, Seychelles and Tanzania.

In order to strengthen and enhance technical advice on ocean governance, maritime boundaries and natural resources management, the Commonwealth Secretariat established partnerships with a range of international organisations and bodies. Partners include the Membership of the Nordic Council, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the Group of 7 Contract Negotiation Initiative (G7 Connex), Chatham House and Revenue Watch.

McClean Hobson,
Director of Maritime Affairs, St Kitts and Nevis

It's critical for us to delimit our maritime boundary because it will lead to effective marine resources management ... There is also a large focus by our government on alternative energy and by delimiting our maritime boundaries it would give us the opportunity to do exploration as it relates to renewable energy such as hydrocarbon and geothermal.

Supporting sustainable development strategies

The Commonwealth Secretariat deployed assistance to the Saint Lucia Ministry of Economic Planning and National Development to develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy. Six months into the project, the Governor-General announced plans to establish a National Vision Commission to lead the political process to support national sustainable development. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Industries piloted the National Sustainable Development Strategy Strategic Business Plan and Results Framework.

Managing and exchanging knowledge sharing good practices and strengthening Commonwealth networks in development

Within the reporting period, the Commonwealth Secretariat published *Assessing Aid for Trade*, seven trade policy discussion papers and 11 editions of the policy advice periodical *Commonwealth Trade Hot Topics*.

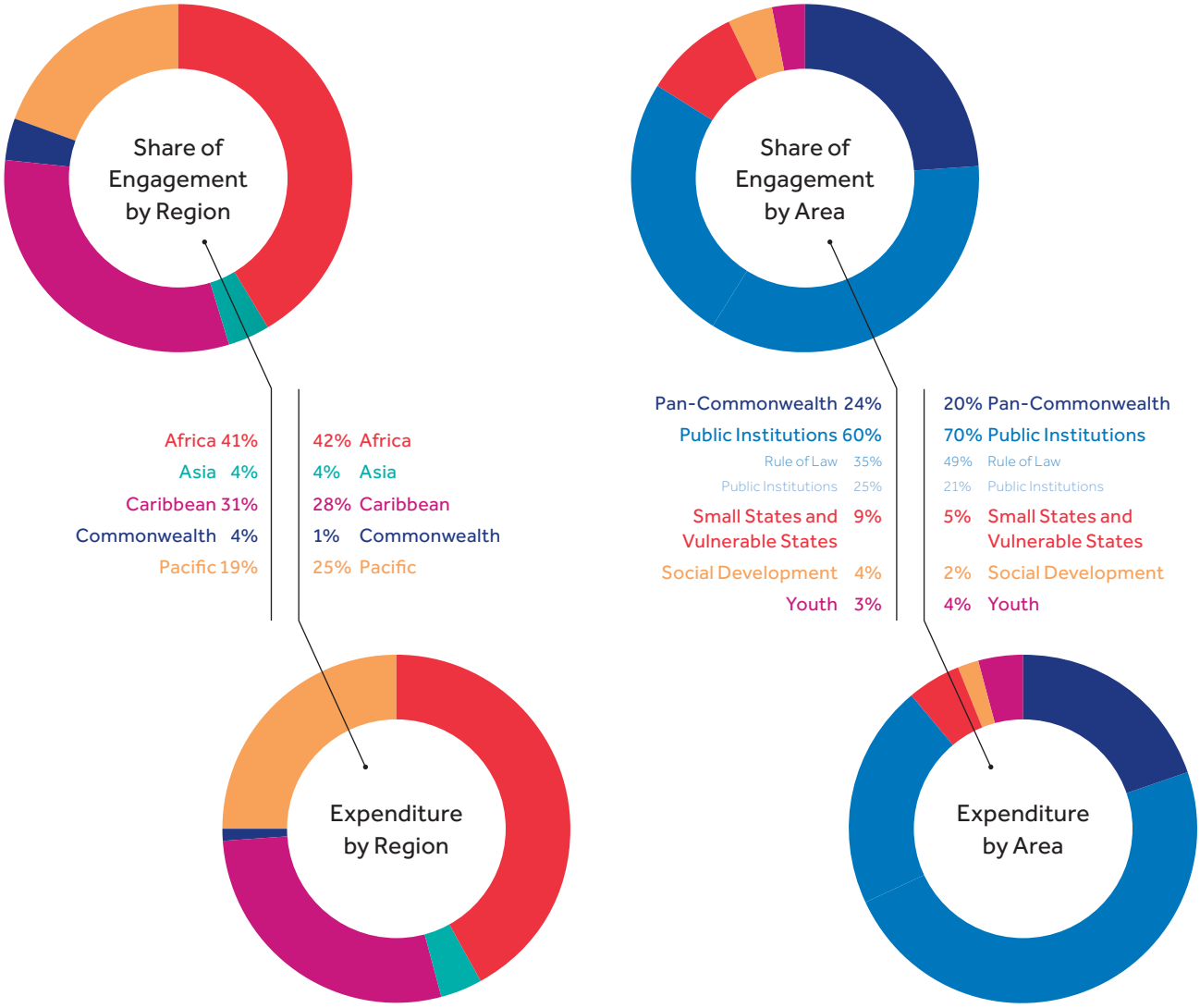
The Secretariat arranged four regional workshops to facilitate trade in Africa. An online forum hosted by Commonwealth Connects provides experts in regional economic communities in Africa with a platform for sharing experiences and learning from each other. A Hub and Spokes network on Commonwealth Connects promotes intra Africa-Caribbean-Pacific exchanges.

Responding to requests from member countries for technical assistance

Technical assistance provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat 2013 to 2015 focused on strengthening national capabilities. Tailored assistance endeavoured to 'best fit' members' needs and circumstances. The Secretariat delivered assistance across all regions and programmes, responding to requests from member countries by commissioning research and analyses, deploying experts, suggesting referrals and facilitating partnerships across the Commonwealth. The new strategy consolidated 72 technical assistance projects into one project. Consolidation meant that the Secretariat responded more quickly to requests from member countries.

Providing Commonwealth expertise direct to member countries

July 2013–June 2015



07 Development: Small States and Vulnerable States

The Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan for the period 2013/14 to 2016/17 introduced an emphasis on small states, an area in which the Commonwealth has considerable expertise as small states account for over half of its membership. In the two years since the launch of the Plan, the Secretariat worked towards international policies, mechanisms and rules that respond to the development strategies and needs of small states for resilience.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Small states**

- Convened the Third Global Biennial Conference on Small States, March 2014
- Presented concrete proposals for the development of small island states at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, September 2014
- Established an Open-ended Ministerial Working Group on the priority development concerns of small states
- Published a study with the World Bank on *Tourism and Inclusive Growth in Small Island Developing States*

Promoting policies responsive to the concerns of small states

The Secretariat supported an Open-ended Ministerial Working Group on Small States to review priority development concerns for Commonwealth advocacy. Support from the Secretariat for dialogues on development in small island states led to concrete Commonwealth proposals presented at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014.

The Secretariat helped small states to identify their concerns on financing for development ahead of the UN conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015. The Secretariat hosted the Commonwealth Conference on Financing for Development in Small States in Barbados in March 2015 to suggest practical solutions to the challenges facing small states in accessing funding for development. The Barbados conference brought together senior officials from ministries of finance and representatives from national, regional and international organisations – including UN agencies.

International policies, mechanisms and rules responsive to the development strategies of small states

The Commonwealth Secretariat identified and proposed responses to the challenges that face small states, advocating for international policies and mechanisms to strengthen resilience and lessen vulnerability. The Secretariat brought the concerns of Commonwealth small states to international processes through statements by the Secretary-General, such as to the High Level Segment of the UN Human Rights Council 25th Regular Session, in Geneva.

Deodat Maharaj,
Deputy Secretary-General
(Economic and Social Development),
Commonwealth Secretariat

'The Commonwealth continues to be a champion for small states by advocating at the global level on issues that matter most to them, including on their high debt burden, vulnerability and their susceptibility to climate change.

Building resilience in Small Island Developing States

In March 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened the Third Global Biennial Conference on Small States. The conference, hosted by Saint Lucia, reviewed priorities for small states in preparation for the UN Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in September 2014 in Samoa and in the context of building resilience goals into the Post-2015 Development Framework.

The Saint Lucia conference drew attention to the synergies between the resilience frameworks developed by the Secretariat and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and led to agreement to collaborate to take the Vulnerability Resilience Framework forward. The collaboration is an important step towards international recognition and adoption of 'vulnerability' as a criteria and 'resilience building' as a pre-condition for development finance.

The Secretariat supported the attendance of two youth leaders at the conference. In a keynote address at the conference Youth Forum, the Secretariat advocated for young people to be included in making decisions about climate change.

The conference resulted in Commonwealth consensus on:

- Strengthening resilience, as an overarching framework for development of small states
- Using vulnerability criteria for providing development financing and preferential trading terms
- Ocean governance frameworks
- Capacity-building and energy issues relating to climate change and ways to create synergies with development priorities
- Links with the G20 and regional organisations, and strengthening regional organisations

In September 2014, the Secretariat collaborated with governments and international organisations in the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, in Samoa, with the aim of securing a sustainable future for these countries. It launched *Building the Resilience of Small States: A Revised Framework* at this meeting.

Resilience and vulnerability framework

Some small states enjoy relatively high GDP per capita – giving the impression of economic strength – when in reality these economies are fragile and disproportionately affected by adverse economic shocks, natural disasters and extreme weather events.

The Commonwealth Vulnerability Resilience Framework was first developed in 2004 with the University of Malta to help countries better measure their susceptibility to shocks, including financial crises and extreme weather events, and develop targeted national policies in response.

The Framework was expanded in 2014 to capture the downsides of an unregulated or badly regulated market, environmental management, governance, social development and social cohesion factors, which are critical contributors to economic resilience.

The Secretariat facilitated meetings of the Open-ended Ministerial Working Group on Small States. The Group developed talking points and solutions from a Commonwealth perspective for key international development conferences preparing the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In October 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank published Tourism and Inclusive Growth in Small Island Developing States during the Small States Forum at the World Bank headquarters. The publication explores how tourism can facilitate growth, create jobs and improve livelihoods in Small Island Developing States. The analysis of experiences in Jamaica, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles and other small states showed the direct and indirect benefits of tourism, discussed the main challenges and proposed recommendations for policy action.

> We have been given a toolkit which will enable us to strengthen our case as Small Island Developing States, to speak more forcefully and to convey our message loud and clear.

Arvin Boolell,
Foreign Minister, Mauritius

Enabling small states to participate in international decision-making

Promoting the concerns of small and vulnerable states at the G20

- In 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) published a paper on *The Accountability of the G20's Development Agenda: Perspectives and Suggestions from Developing Countries of the Commonwealth and Francophonie*.

- In 2014, the Secretariat submitted recommendations for consideration by the G20, including on the focus for G20 development efforts, and strengthening the Commonwealth–Francophonie–G20 relationship. The recommendations were developed through 2014 Commonwealth–Francophonie–G20 dialogue and outreach.

- The G20 followed up on several Commonwealth and OIF recommendations on agricultural productivity, infrastructure and aid for trade.

The Secretariat facilitated annual dialogues between ministers and senior officials of Commonwealth and Francophonie countries, the G20 Chair and members of the G20 Development Working Group. The 2014 meeting was attended by participants from more than 20 Commonwealth and Francophonie developing countries, representatives of the European Union, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The Secretariat presented Commonwealth perspectives on the challenges faced by countries with offshore banking sectors in meeting new tax transparency standards. The G20 Development Working Group acknowledged issues raised by the Secretariat on behalf of Commonwealth developing country members.

At the April 2015 meeting, the Turkish G20 presidency re-iterated its pledge to ensure that inclusive development remained a central focus of its summit in November 2015. This followed the fifth annual dialogue of members of the Commonwealth and La Francophonie in Washington DC. Ministers and senior government officials, the Turkish G20 Presidency and Development Working Group, as well as international and regional organisations, took part in the dialogue.

> We have found this dialogue to be very enriching, and the insights from colleagues have been extremely useful and very informative.

Clare Walsh,
2014 Chair, G20 Development Working Group

Supporting engagement of small states in the UN and other forums

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided office space and services for diplomatic missions of small states and regional organisations representing small states in Geneva and New York. The facilities provided by the Secretariat enabled small states to participate in international decision-making processes and dialogues. Two human rights experts based in the Geneva Office provided advisory services and technical assistance to small states participating in discussions and decision-making processes in Geneva and facilitated dedicated briefing sessions for small states on human rights mechanisms.

Delegates from small states called for international recognition of their vulnerabilities and targeted responses to their specific challenges at the Commonwealth Conference on Financing for Development in Small States in Barbados in March 2015. The conference was attended by senior officials from ministries of finance and representatives from national, regional and international organisations and helped prepare delegations for the UN's Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2015.

In May 2015, the Secretariat supported rule of law experts from small Commonwealth countries to attend intergovernmental negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes: **Climate finance**

- Convened the Expert Group on Climate Finance that made recommendations on climate change financing to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change summit in Warsaw in November 2013
- Initiated the development of a proposal for a Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub

Creating climate financing frameworks responsive to small and vulnerable states

The Commonwealth Secretariat convened two meetings of the Commonwealth Expert Group on Climate Finance. The remit of the Group is to identify ways for small and climate-vulnerable states to access funds that are available to support low-emission and climate-resilient development. The report of the Group prepared by the Secretariat and presented at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November 2013, called for transparency and accountability in processes and procedures for accessing climate funds. The Secretariat took forward the recommendations to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change summit in Warsaw in November 2013.

At CHOGM in 2013, leaders welcomed Malta's offer to establish a Small States Centre of Excellence for democracy and development and a Small States Trade Financing Facility. The initiative considers ways for small states to integrate effectively into the global trading system. The preliminary meeting of the Working Group on the Small States Trade Financing Facility, in Barbados in March 2014, supported by the Secretariat, comprised a group of experts from Singapore to Washington. The Working Group assessed the need for a Commonwealth trade and investment financing facility for small and developing states without access to such resources and the viability of such a facility.

The Secretariat initiated the development of a proposal for a Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub to be considered at the CHOGM in November 2015.

Oceans economy

In a practical step to support Small Island Developing States benefit from the blue – or oceans – economy, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat, in co-operation with the Governments of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, co-financed a pilot project in The Bahamas and Seychelles.

The project builds on work by the Secretariat on the delimitation of national maritime boundaries and strategies for the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources and activities. The outcomes will provide a better understanding of the development opportunities the oceans present to Small Island Developing States and practical ways to assist them to diversify their existing economic base.

08 Commonwealth Convening Power and Communications

The Commonwealth Secretariat engaged in global discussions and decision-making processes to present the perspectives of members, including least developed countries and small states of the Commonwealth.

Advocating and building consensus

The Secretary-General's Office engaged with national, regional and international processes at political level. The Commonwealth–G20–Francophonie Dialogue in 2014 allowed for discussions on Financing for Development issues, including the debt problem of Commonwealth member countries, as well as innovative financing instruments.

A Commonwealth statement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, developed by an Open-Ended Working Group of Heads of Government, was formally adopted at a meeting of leaders in the margins of the UN General Assembly in 2014. The statement fed into the consultative process of the UN on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Commonwealth Secretariat support for advancing Commonwealth principles and values in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

October 2013	The Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting convened by the Secretariat considered recommendations for the Post-2015 Development Framework
September 2014	The Secretariat submitted the Commonwealth Statement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda to the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly
	Global Education endorsed Commonwealth recommendations on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education presented by the Secretariat on behalf of member countries
October 2014	The Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting convened by the Secretariat explored financing the Post-2015 Global Development Framework
	A Global Consultation that informed the UN High Level Panel considered Commonwealth recommendations for the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education presented by the Secretariat on behalf of member countries
March 2015	A conference on Financing for Development in Small States convened by the Secretariat agreed on four common priorities for small states that should be reflected in the final Financing for Development Framework: debt sustainability, climate change financing, international acknowledgement of the vulnerability of small states, and capacity-building
June 2015	A Commonwealth Trade Symposium convened by the Secretariat dedicated a panel session to the cross-cutting role of trade in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and new global partnerships for development

Commonwealth meetings

The Secretariat convened meetings of heads of government and ministers and commissioned policy analysis to develop collective Commonwealth positions.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings 2013-2015

The Secretariat convened the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November 2013 in Sri Lanka, on the theme, 'Growth with Equity: Inclusive Development'.

In November 2014, the Secretariat launched preparations for the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Malta on the theme, 'The Commonwealth – Adding Global Value'.

Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings 2013-2015

The Secretariat facilitated high levels of participation by Commonwealth members in ministerial meetings between 2013 and 2015.

Partnerships

The Commonwealth Secretariat carried out a series of consultative meetings with accredited organisations to set objectives, outline areas of mutual interest and develop new opportunities for collaboration. This included exploring potential partnerships with a number of international organisations, such as the African Union Commission, UN Women and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In May 2015, the Secretariat organised a meeting with accredited organisations to discuss key issues and develop a plan of action. More than 60 organisations participated. Prior to the United Nation's Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, the Secretariat invited organisations to contribute to a plan of engagement for the conference.

The Secretariat undertook capacity-building activities to improve communication and strengthen ties between its partners. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum, for example, has been invited by the United Nations to participate in a global forum as part of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty.

Strengthening the Commonwealth profile

From 2013 to 2015, the Secretariat strengthened the Commonwealth's profile, increased visibility and built public awareness and understanding of Commonwealth values and accomplishments.

Press releases, official statements, talking points for spokespersons, media lines and social media generated positive coverage in the media and an increase in traffic to the Commonwealth website. On-the-ground communications advice and support was also given to Commonwealth Observer Groups during the reporting period.

The new, thecommonwealth.org, website was launched in 2013 with a sharper focus on generating news of Commonwealth events, activities and outputs.

Use of Commonwealth Connects, the online collaboration platform has grown year-on-year. To date, more than 250 short and long-term online networks have been set up for a variety of purposes, including secure document and knowledge sharing; project management; developing best practice and event co-ordination.

In 2014 and 2015, the Secretariat supported a systematic communication campaign across member countries for Commonwealth Day, providing resources, stickers and posters. The 'YourCommonwealth.org' network of correspondents posted news from around the Commonwealth. Publicity by the Secretariat for the 16th and 17th Commonwealth themes, #TeamCommonwealth in 2015 and A Young Commonwealth in 2015, led to wide coverage by the media.

The Secretariat launched a new visual identity and comprehensive brand guidelines in September 2013. The new branding reflects today's modern Commonwealth of 53 members.

The Secretariat published 37 books between July 2013 and June 2015.

Launching the Commonwealth iLibrary

Commonwealth Secretariat books were published online for the first time in partnership with the OECD in 2014. The Commonwealth iLibrary launched in September 2014 with 171 full-text titles available for any user to read for free online. To complete the online collection, over 700 print titles were digitised. The digitisation was completed in April 2015. By September 2015 the Secretariat's entire collection of priced books, over 900 titles, will be available to view, share and read for free via this platform.

The Secretariat's library and archives contain books, periodicals, conference reports, discussion and working papers, government publications and official Commonwealth publications. Some collections are available online. Archives are held as physical document collections at Marlborough House in London. Between July 2014 and June 2015 there were approximately 4,269 visits to the Library and Archives online public access catalogue found on the Secretariat website.

During the reporting period, internal communications focused on the design and content for a new intranet platform, which will launch by the end of 2015.

Following consultation with the Board, staff and Commonwealth organisations, a number of initiatives were carried out to celebrate the Secretariat's 50th anniversary in 2015. These included the design of a commemorative logo, a garden party held in the grounds of Marlborough House, a social media campaign that shared 50 facts about the Secretariat and the launch of a new Vision and Mission statement for the Secretariat.

Our Vision

To help create and sustain a Commonwealth that is mutually respectful, resilient, peaceful and prosperous and that cherishes equality, diversity and shared values.

Our Mission

We support member governments, and partner with the broader Commonwealth family and others, to improve the well-being of all Commonwealth citizens and to advance their shared interests globally.

Promoting Commonwealth goals and values among school children

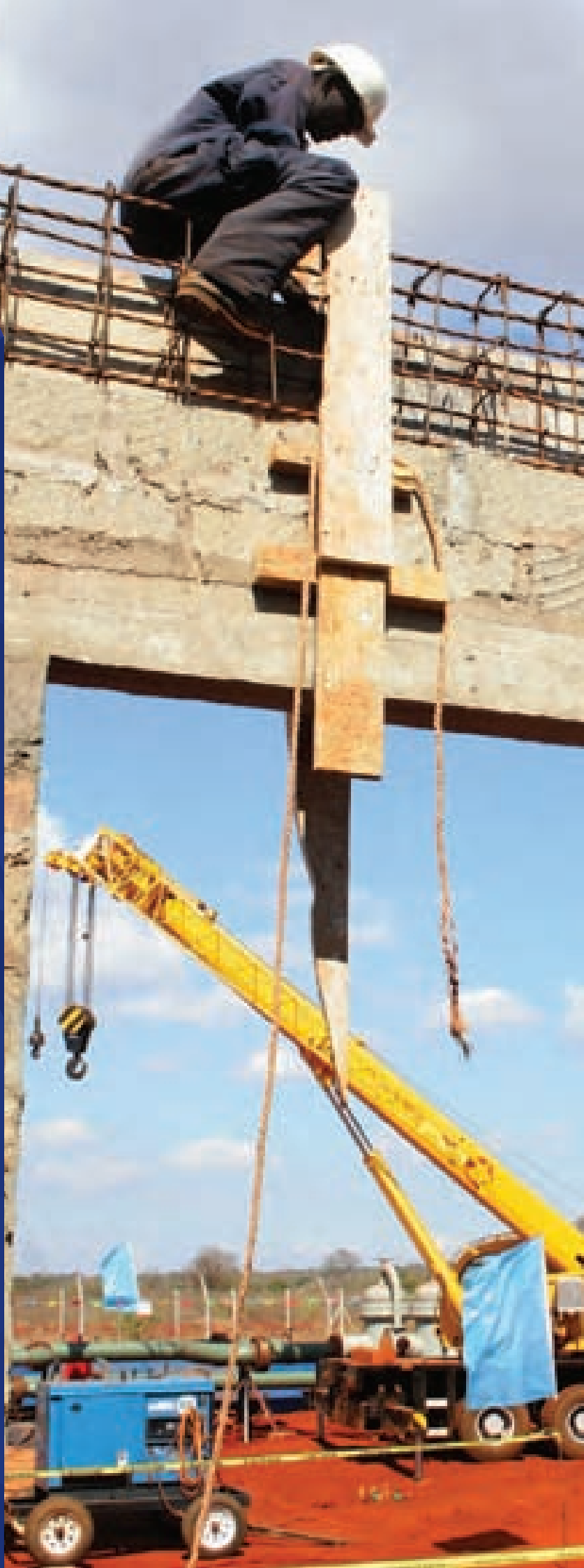
The Commonwealth Secretariat, the British Council and the BBC launched the Commonwealth Class campaign ahead of the Commonwealth Games 2014 in Glasgow to promote understanding of the Commonwealth, and its goals and values, among school children. The campaign linked democracy, development and diversity. Thirty education packs and learning resources for children aged 7 to 14 years reached 88,091 schools in all regions across the Commonwealth. On 10 March 2014, 274 schools worldwide took part in the World's Biggest Assembly.

09 Strategic Planning, Human Resources and Organisational Management

During the first two years of the Strategic Plan 2013/14 to 2016/17, the Commonwealth Secretariat introduced new systems and procedures for planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting results-based outcomes. This included the development of work plans focused on outputs and activities and details of both the short-term and intermediate outcomes they were meant to achieve. The Plan also consolidated 377 disparate projects into 50 targeted projects.

Commonwealth Secretariat outcomes:
Strategic planning, human resources and organisational management

- Undertook the most fundamental organisational reform in a generation
- Overhauled its organisational structure leading to the voluntary exit of 56 staff, 23 redundancies and redeployment of 13 staff
- Reduced the number of outcome areas in projects from 377 to 50
- Introduced a Results Based Management approach to project design, delivery and assessment
- Restructured and renewed the Commonwealth Youth Programme
- Adopted the international standard, ISO 31000, for risk management



Delivering the Strategic Plan

The current Strategic Plan reflects the Secretariat's commitment to Results Based Management (RBM). Revised formats for the Six Monthly Progress reports and the Annual Results Reports were also introduced to reflect RBM principles. Staff from across the Secretariat at every level have been trained in RBM, and ongoing technical support and advice is available to divisions.

The consolidation of 377 projects into 50 focused on delivering strategic outcomes. Fewer projects reduced the administrative load of designing and approving projects and freed time for implementing, monitoring and assessing activities. The new projects are larger in scope and are designed for the life of the Strategic Plan.

Monitoring and evaluation for quality and results

Over the current strategic period, the quality assurance function of the Commonwealth Secretariat has been further strengthened through the implementation of a robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework that is tightly focused on achieving results. A systematic approach has been taken to help ensure that the Secretariat is both 'doing the right things' and 'doing them right' at each stage of the project and programme cycles through gender-sensitive planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. A four year strategy aims to build capacity for RBM through training, improved systems, processes and tools.

The improved design of the Project Management Information System supports managers to embed RBM principles in planning and implementing results-focused projects that deliver on the mandates of the Strategic Plan – as well as ensure that results are documented and shared across the organisation. The annual planning and budgeting process has also been refined to ensure investment is in line with results. Ongoing and in-depth training and technical support are provided to programme divisions across the Secretariat in order to systematise good practice RBM tools and processes. These efforts and the resulting increased technical capacity within the organisation are evidenced in the improved quality of results-driven projects as well as reporting through the six-monthly and annual results reports.

T Jasudasen, High Commissioner to the UK, Singapore

I find that for the first time in a long time, I actually look at a report by the Secretariat which gives me a good feel for what is happening...

The Secretariat regularly conducts and commissions evaluations and impact studies in accordance with the priorities of the Strategic Results Framework. Special attention is given to understanding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Secretariat's work. These evaluations are an important part of organisational learning and draw out lessons on how the Secretariat can demonstrate better results. From 2013/14 to 2014/15, the Secretariat conducted six programme evaluations, four country evaluations and three impact assessments, with recommendations shared with relevant stakeholders across the organisation and taken on board to improve future programming.

The recent Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Plan included fine-tuning indicators in line with the Strategic Plan outcomes to ensure all new projects have measurable baselines and targets, which inform the project design, assessment and review of progress against planned outcomes. This will further improve the Secretariat's ability to understand the results that have been achieved, and to harness and use learning to improve programme effectiveness.

Managing human resources

The Commonwealth Secretariat introduced a new organisational structure in July 2014. A voluntary exit scheme led to the departure of 56 staff by June 2014. A further 23 staff were made redundant and 13 staff were redeployed. As a result of the restructure, 164 posts, including 27 new Young Professional Programme posts were created.

Intensive recruitment during 2014/15 has improved the overall capacity of the workforce to deliver on the Strategic Plan by year-end. Up to 79 per cent of the 164 vacant positions have been recruited.

Recruitment efficiency was improved, expanding global advertising opportunities for Secretariat postings through greater use of digital networks rather than relying mainly on print. The introduction of an electronic recruitment system and the use of Skype for interviewing shortlisted candidates reduced recruitment time by six weeks on average across all role levels. This has led to enhanced candidate experience and improved the Secretariat's ability to deliver by filling posts more quickly. It has also contributed to cost savings. The Secretariat has improved both the gender balance and reflection of Commonwealth national diversity in its staff profile. Around 59 per cent of all appointments in 2014/15 were female. The number of Commonwealth countries represented in the workforce increased by 8 per cent to 36 out of 53.

The closure of the four Commonwealth Youth Programme Regional Centres led to 96 staff redundancies. This programme was replaced by a revitalised and renewed Commonwealth Youth Programme.

The new staff handbook was progressively released from October 2014 replacing the 2002 *Sutherland Human Resources Handbook*.

Organisational management

Adopting ISO 31000

In 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat adopted ISO 31000 'Risk management – Principles and guidelines'. Risk-management policy and procedures cover all decisions, operations, strategies, business planning, project management, general management and operations.

The Secretariat's organisational management functions have continued to adopt and entrench international best practice and standards which enable the organisation to deliver the outcomes of the Strategic Plan. The Internal Justice Systems of International Organisations Legitimacy Index 2015 rated the Secretariat number one, above all other international organisations, demonstrating entrenched best practice. Further, the introduction of the international standard for risk management shows the Secretariat's willingness to lift ourselves up to, and be judged by, international standards.

Gary Dunn,
Deputy Secretary-General (Corporate), Commonwealth Secretariat

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