Biennial Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General

2011 - 2013

The Commonwealth

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The Commonwealth Comparative Advantage and Value

01

This report covers the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat for the two-year period from July 2011 to June 2013. It marks a time of transformation for the organisation, following recommendations made by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group in its report 'A Commonwealth of the People: Time for Urgent Reform' in 2011.

Established by the Secretary-General following the decision of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2009, the Eminent Persons Group was tasked with sharpening impact, strengthening networks, and raising the Commonwealth profile. Its report was presented to Commonwealth leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Australia in October 2011.

The 2011–2013 period was marked by broad global challenges. Young people found their voice more and more through social media, and began influencing and driving political agendas in unprecedented ways. Economically, recognition of the long-term effects of the worldwide financial crisis created pressures and forced adjustment to development strategies as countries and donor agencies adapted to these pressures.

In response to the changing times, the Commonwealth Secretariat embarked on a process of restructuring and repositioning. It finalised its 2013/14 – 2016/17 Strategic Plan in May 2013 after a broad-based two-year consultative process. The focus was on delivering within a results-based framework and with priorities that reflected the organisation's comparative advantage.

The 2011–2013 period was also one of assessment of the Millennium Development Goals and deliberations on the new targets that would succeed them after 2015. The Commonwealth was a participant in this process. The Commonwealth's accomplishments over this period reflect its distinctive features and contribution as a unique values-based intergovernmental family.

The Commonwealth Charter

Commonwealth Heads adopted the Commonwealth Charter in December 2012. It brings together the values and aspirations that unite the Commonwealth and which have been collectively affirmed by Heads over the years: democracy, human rights and the rule of law – in a single, accessible document. It expresses the commitment of member states to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth. The Charter also acknowledges the role of civil society in supporting the goals and values of the Commonwealth.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth, signed this historic document at Marlborough House on Commonwealth Day, 11 March 2013. The Charter is a significant outcome of the Eminent Persons Group report. Importantly, it represents member governments' collective aspirations to build the organisation further and make it more relevant for the 21st Century.

A unique political and development organisation

The Commonwealth works on the premise that development and democracy are closely interlinked. Sustainable development needs democratic stability and an enabling environment in which equitable economic and social goals can be pursued and accomplished. Likewise, political progress can only be achieved with healthy and inclusive economic and social development. The Commonwealth also recognises that member countries have much to offer each other through learning and exchange. Its role as an independent interlocutor continues to be a distinctive strength, while the 'trusted partner' status it enjoys allows the organisation to work with member states in strengthening institutions in ways that safeguard the values to which members have subscribed.

The Commonwealth also remains an influential voice for small and vulnerable economies and of global advocacy on issues of growth, resilience and climate financing.

The Commonwealth's experience as a pioneer in youth development enables it to take innovative steps to optimise the youth dividend in its member countries at a time when concerns around youth employment and participatory citizenship are dominating global agendas.

Tailored approaches and responsive ways of working

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work responds to the needs of its member states, taking into account what can be achieved with available resources. It takes guidance from the mandates of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) and ministerial meetings that take place periodically.

The Commonwealth Secretariat can respond rapidly to requests for short and long-term technical assistance, using the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) as a primary mechanism for delivering assistance. This provision is often used to deepen capacity in an area of work that the Commonwealth Secretariat has either developed and piloted or can otherwise offer expertise.

The organisation continues to build on its record of developing well-respected policy analysis, research and knowledge-sharing services. Over the 2011 to 2013 period, it has capitalised on South-South peer learning and exchange to assess and distil lessons of best practice and share knowledge within and across Commonwealth regions.

These approaches reflect the Commonwealth Secretariat's commitment to facilitating mutual assistance between members through initiating and supporting communities of practice through face-to-face meetings as well as online, using 'Commonwealth Connects', the Secretariat's secure, cloud-based collaborative workspace platform.

Peace, Democracy and Consensus Building

02

The Commonwealth observes elections on request by national election commissions. It helps to enhance the quality of the electoral process through peer support, and assists with institutional strengthening development between elections. It is also committed to preventing and resolving conflict by enhancing adherence to the Commonwealth's fundamental values and principles.

The Commonwealth Secretariat delivers the Secretary-General's Good Offices work by promoting political dialogue, fostering greater democratic space for political and civil actors, and strengthening democratic institutions. An important aspect of this approach is discreet engagements with member governments, usually carried out by the Secretary-General and his staff, but also at times by his Special Envoys, who work towards reinforcing Commonwealth values. The Commonwealth has used its comparative advantage as a trusted partner to carry out such dialogue and engagement, to introduce long-term conflict prevention methodologies such as strengthening local dispute resolution mechanisms, and mediation and negotiation training for election bodies and parliamentarians.

Highlights 2011-2013

- The Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Maldives, Sir Donald McKinnon, contributed towards charting the way forward in addressing the challenging political situation in Maldives following the contested transfer of power in February 2012, including working for long-term institutional strengthening.
- Twenty-one Commonwealth member countries held national elections during this reporting period, with Commonwealth election observers present at 13 of them. The Commonwealth election observers were considered as a positive and constructive influence.
- The Commonwealth Electoral Network was launched in 2010. It has since established itself as a major platform of peer support to enhance the standards on all aspects of election management. The network held six working group meetings in the period under review.

The Work of the Special Envoy to the Maldives

The Special Envoy to Maldives engaged with key stakeholders to facilitate the strengthening of the Commission of National Inquiry (CoNI) to make it more impartial, credible and broadly acceptable. The Special Envoy succeeded in getting agreement to sharpen the scope of the inquiry and to expand the composition of the CoNI to include an international Co-Chair, a representative of the former President, as well as two international advisers.

The Secretariat's ongoing engagement has allowed it to help shape regional and international thinking on Maldives.

The Secretariat's ongoing engagement has allowed it to help shape regional and international thinking on Maldives. By co-ordinating closely with major multilateral organisations such as the European Union, the United Nations, and other international partners, the Commonwealth has ensured that the efforts towards consolidating democratic institutions and practice in Maldives are at all times relevant and appropriately targeted.

Good Offices for Peace

Important Good Offices interventions were made during this period:

- In Maldives, a Special Envoy appointed by the Secretary-General helped strengthen the Commission of National Inquiry (CoNI) looking into the constitutionality of the transfer of power in February 2012. His deployment has assisted in developing a co-ordinated international approach to the contentious transition as well as to long-term institutional development in Maldives.
- The Commonwealth has sought to assist Swaziland in progressing on its democratic political goals. The appointment of an Adviser by the Secretary-General in September 2012 provided the Commonwealth with enhanced access to key stakeholders in Swaziland. The objective was to promote greater adherence to Commonwealth values and principles.
- Following the 2012 elections in Sierra Leone, the Commonwealth played a role in assisting managing political tension when the Chair of the Commonwealth Observer Group helped to broker a meeting between the victorious and other candidates. This led to electoral complaints being channelled through the legal system, without violence or disruption of law and order.

From 2011 to 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat engaged in institutional strengthening work in Cameroon, The Gambia , Kenya, and Lesotho to augment political dialogue between opposing parties. In Lesotho, the Commonwealth Secretariat supported the establishment of District Dispute Committees to resolve electoral claims and disputes. This led to a request for assistance to strengthen the management and functioning of the new coalition government in the country.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is in the process of developing a negotiation and mediation manual, designed for use by parliamentarians, election management bodies and national human rights institutions.

The Secretariat's ongoing engagement has helped shape regional and international thinking on Maldives.

Working towards fair, participatory and transparent elections

Twenty-one Commonwealth countries have held national elections during the last two years. For many of these, the Commonwealth Secretariat has played a significant role in ensuring that the electoral processes have been credible, participatory and transparent. Commonwealth election observer missions were deployed to 13 countries at the request of their election management bodies or governments. Chronologically these were: Uganda, Nigeria, Zambia, Cameroon, The Gambia, Guyana, St Lucia, Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Kenya and Pakistan. Engagement of Commonwealth observer teams has helped engender greater confidence in the electoral process.

Sierra Leone retains its record of peaceful democracy

In November 2012, Sierra Leone went to the polls and witnessed another peaceful election, further consolidating the political, social and economic stability built after many years of conflict. The Commonwealth observed elections for the sixth time. After polling day, the main opposition party questioned the validity of the election results and demanded an independent international enquiry[1] into the process.

The Chair of the Commonwealth Observer Group helped supplement local efforts to broker a meeting between the victorious and other candidates. The Secretaries-General of the opposing parties subsequently met and issued a joint press statement. The opposition decided to challenge the outcome of the elections in the Supreme Court, but attended the opening of Parliament on 6 December 2012.

[1] The Gambia has since withdrawn from the Commonwealth with effect from 3 October 2013.

Pakistan's historic General Elections, May 2013

The Commonwealth Observer Group to Pakistan's 2013 General Elections hailed the successful conclusion of the elections as a significant milestone for the country. The elections represented the first time in Pakistan that power was peacefully transferred from one elected civilian government, after completing its full term, to another. This was the result of consensus among all actors and institutions of the state, polity and citizenry to hold credible elections on time under a strengthened legal framework, and by an empowered Elections Commission. For a country that has faced regular and prolonged periods of military rule, this consensus is a strong signal of Pakistan's commitment to democracy.

This consensus among all actors and institutions of the state, polity and citizenry is a strong signal of Pakistan's commitment to democracy.

The Commonwealth Observer Group noted that these historic elections were marred by unprecedented levels of violence, intimidation and bloodshed, carried out by militant groups attempting to derail the electoral process and disadvantage certain political parties. Despite this, the Group noted several strengths such as the overall voter turn-out and a significant number of first-time voters. This was linked to an improved electoral register and the use of technology to disseminate vital information to voters. The Group's recommendations included reviewing the effectiveness of security provided to candidates and parties, increasing the participation of women and minorities, and putting in place enforcement mechanisms for Codes of Conduct for political parties.

The Commonwealth Electoral Network

Launched in 2010, the Commonwealth Electoral Network has contributed significantly towards strengthening the role of national Election Management Bodies through peer-to-peer exchanges and building on the shared electoral and administrative mechanisms. The Commonwealth Electoral Network aims to promote good practice in the field of election management, to facilitate experience-sharing, and to foster a sense of community among Commonwealth election management bodies.

The Commonwealth Electoral Network is still in the early stages of development, and the next couple of years will see the Commonwealth Secretariat increase the degree of support it is able to provide to members. Six working group meetings have been convened, covering various important themes. These include voter education and electoral participation, voter registration, independence of election management bodies, managing the influence of incumbency, and political party expenditure and campaign financing. Using its online workspace on the network sharing platform, Commonwealth Connects, the Commonwealth Secretariat has established a secure online community for Commonwealth Electoral Network members to share their experiences, ask questions, and learn from each other.

The Steering Committee has met to develop future programmes in line with the needs of Commonwealth Electoral Network members. The Commonwealth Secretariat supported biennial conferences in 2010 in Accra and in 2012 in Toronto to bring together representatives from election management bodies for peer learning and networking.

In June 2013, under the strategic direction of the Commonwealth Electoral Network and with funding from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Commonwealth Secretariat launched the Junior Election Professionals Initiative to build the capacity of the next generation of electoral administrators.

Over the next two years, a series of professional development events have been planned, engaging at least 100 junior election professionals from across the Commonwealth. The sustainability of the initiative will be secured through the use of Commonwealth Connects as an effective tool for peer-to-peer networking and support. The programme is further expected to lead to the creation of a pool of trained participants for future technical assistance programmes and Commonwealth Observer Groups. The initiative aims to increase the technical capacity of junior election professionals as well as their understanding of international election standards.

The Junior Election Professionals Initiative

The Junior Election Professionals Initiative highlights the Commonwealth's commitment to strengthening democratic culture and institutions. It will focus on empowering election professionals in junior ranks, with many years to serve.

Supported by the Australian Agency for International Development, the initiative provides development opportunities for junior election professionals who work in substantive positions but have not yet attained the status of senior official or commissioner.

This provision will benefit junior professionals on an individual level while also delivering longer-term capacity to their respective election management bodies.

Upholding Commonwealth Values: the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) deals with serious or persistent violations of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values and principles enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. Established in 1995, CMAG's task is to assess the nature of infringements and recommend measures for collective Commonwealth action aimed at the restoration of democracy and constitutional rule.

At the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, CMAG received an enhanced mandate from leaders to engage proactively with member countries considered to be in danger of serious or persistent violation of Commonwealth values. Heads of Government outlined 'triggers' that could invoke CMAG scrutiny. These included the abrogation of constitutions, unjustified postponement of elections, systematic violation of human rights, undermining of the rule of law and independence of the judiciary, closing political space, and suppression of media freedoms. There is now a more closely defined link between the Secretary-General's Good Offices role and the scrutiny of CMAG.

A strengthened CMAG has sought to consult more frequently on situations of concern, including by teleconference. It has also put in place innovative engagement initiatives such as the ministerial mission to Maldives after the contentious transfer of power in February 2012.

Delivery

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Political Affairs Division, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary-General, delivered the Good Offices, Democracy and Consensus Building work. In doing so, it received support from the Human Rights Unit, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division, the Governance and Institutional Development Division and the Communications and Public Affairs Division.

The Commonwealth is able to respond rapidly and flexibly to political uncertainties such as coups d'état, unrest and other unforeseen events. The placement of advisers also supports the Commonwealth's long-term democracy work. The organisation also promotes best practice and strengthens democratic values through its publications and by facilitating workshops, seminars and conferences.

The Commonwealth Secretariat provides technical assistance on request, which enables it to work in partnership and with access to representatives from governments, political parties and civil society. An invitation means that the Commonwealth Secretariat can work effectively with governments and various stakeholders, including election commissions, parliaments, political parties and the media. Engagements by the Secretary-General's Special Envoys present a unique approach that the Commonwealth Secretariat is able to offer member countries. The Commonwealth Secretariat also ensures that trust is maintained by delivering directly through its own staff in the majority of instances.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has continued to work with a number of other organisations that observe elections, including the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Caribbean Community, the Organization of American States and the European Union. Collaborations with other organisations within the Commonwealth family, such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, have actively supported the Commonwealth's democracy work.

Rule of Law

03

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to promote and strengthen the rule of law that underpins strong democratic and accountable governance. In the period under review, it has continued to help member countries harmonise their national laws with international frameworks. A shared administrative legacy and similar legal systems across most member states enable the Commonwealth to offer swift, targeted assistance for the development and maintenance of expertise and institutions needed to uphold the rule of law.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work includes both assistance towards legal and judicial reform, with strong human rights and gender justice dimensions. Between 2011 and 2013, the organisation delivered improvements to national justice institutions in over 45 Commonwealth countries, primarily small and vulnerable states.

- In Sierra Leone, the Commonwealth Secretariat funded a Master of the High Court and two High Court judges, which has contributed to a reduction in the backlog of cases and helped establish petitions courts and six electoral offences.
- In The Gambia, Commonwealth Secretariat-funded prosecutors have implemented improved data capturing systems for cases.
- In Botswana's Ministry of Defence, Justice and Security, technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat has led to the formulation of a draft paper on sentencing policy. This draft policy includes alternatives to custodial sentences, which has resulted in reducing prison overcrowding.
- Law ministers approved a revised and updated Commonwealth Scheme on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (the Harare Scheme) in 2011. Together with the London Scheme on Extradition, the Harare Scheme provides contemporary standards to assist member countries develop effective international co-operation.

These examples are taken from a broad portfolio of work, which includes advocacy, technical assistance, research and practical training in areas such as legislative drafting, judicial education, transnational crimes, gender and human rights. The Commonwealth Secretariat also develops and strengthens Commonwealth legal networks, and facilitates access to legal information.

Highlights 2011-2013

- The Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in July 2011 paved the way for a streamlined portfolio of work for its Rule of Law Programme in order to maximise impact in member countries.
- Commonwealth Law Ministers adopted the revised Commonwealth Scheme on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters to strengthen international co-operation between member countries.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat produced legal training modules via the Commonwealth Connects platform and through the Commonwealth Network of Contact Persons (a network for international co-operation in criminal cases, which encourages justice officials to communicate, share information and collaborate online).

Legislative drafting

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a long history of providing assistance and training in legislative drafting. Over the last two years, 38 Commonwealth countries have benefited from strengthened judicial capacity, which in turn has resulted in the development of key legislation and enhanced skills among legal personnel.

There are three pillars of support that the Commonwealth Secretariat provides in the field of legislative drafting. These are:

- Long-term technical assistance through the appointment of legislative drafters to institutions in member countries;
- Long-term assistance for training in legislative drafting; and
- Short-term training for legislative drafting.

The Commonwealth Secretariat supported a three-month course in Ghana in 2012 in advanced legislative drafting for African Commonwealth jurisdictions. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat has benefited from the placement of legislative drafters, as have individually, Belize, Jamaica, Kenya, Seychelles, Swaziland and Montserrat.

Over the last two years, 38 Commonwealth countries have benefited from strengthened judicial capacity

Legislative drafting seminars for the Caribbean region were held in August 2011 in Barbados and in February 2013 in Trinidad and Tobago.

In November 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat organised a meeting of the Heads of Legislative Drafting Offices of African Commonwealth jurisdictions.

Working with Kenya to fulfil legislative requirements for implementation of new constitution

Following the announcement of Kenya's new constitution in August 2010, the Commonwealth Secretariat provided legislative drafters to work with the State Law Office and the Law Reform Commission to write key legislation required to implement the new constitution.

As a result of the Commonwealth Secretariat's assistance, over 30 pieces of legislation have been produced. These include bills covering public finance, land reform, and decentralisation and election reform. The passing of this legislation is essential to rebuilding public confidence in the political system.

Placement and training of judges and other legal actors

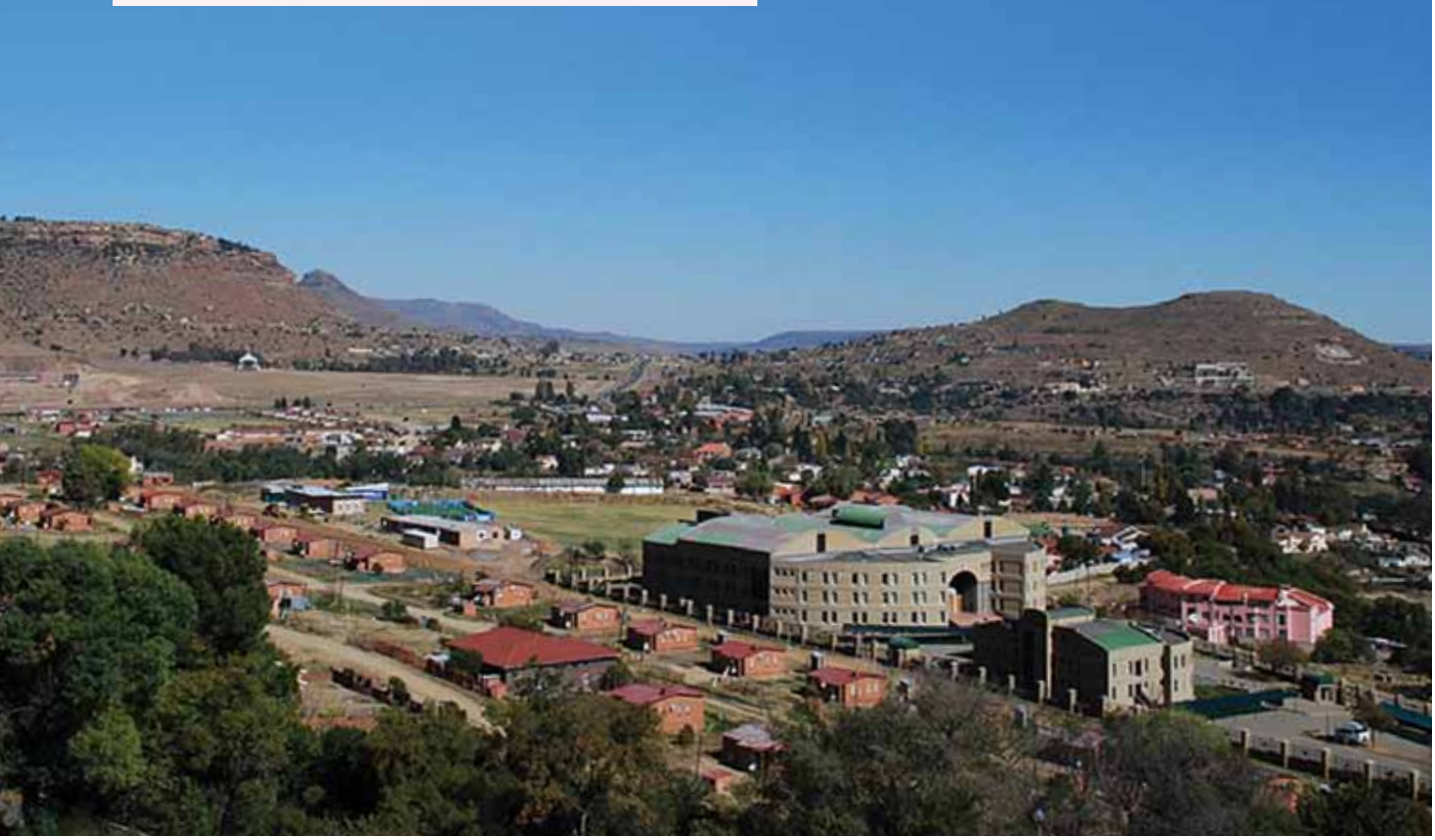
The placement and training of judges and other legal experts has been a principal part of the Commonwealth Secretariat's work in strengthening judicial processes. The Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, and Swaziland have all benefited within this reporting period. This programme responds directly to requests from member countries that face challenges in filling positions internally. Legal expertise is deployed on the basis of South-South co-operation and a shared legal tradition and democratic institutional frameworks and processes. Between 2011 and 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat placed nine judges across the Commonwealth, bringing the total number of CFTC-funded judges active during this time to fourteen. Strengthening judicial systems produces outcomes that lay the foundations for other economic and social development goals, as in Lesotho.

Complementary to the long-term placement of experts is the short-term Commonwealth Pro Bono Mentoring and Placement Programme for criminal justice officials. The programme boosts prosecution skills and promotes high standards in the administration of criminal justice. Officials from jurisdictions needing capacity strengthening are partnered with skilled professionals in agencies of other Commonwealth countries with the requisite specialisation for a maximum period of three weeks. The strength of this programme is the 'hands on experience' acquired by the participants. Mauritius, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Uganda have testified to the practical benefit of the programme.

Establishing a Commercial Court in Lesotho

The Commonwealth Secretariat's provision of a full-time judge since 2009 has resulted in key progress indicators coming to fruition within this reporting period. The Commercial Court backlog has been cleared, Commercial Court rules and procedures have been developed, and a Commercial Bar established. Commercial Court judges have also benefited from training, which has strengthened capacity at the institutional level.

The immediate result is that Lesotho now has an effectively functioning Commercial Court, supporting the rule of law on commercial matters. This serves to enhance Lesotho's economic prospects as investors gain confidence in the legal system. Lesotho moved up 7 places from 143 in 2012 to 136 in 2013 in the World Bank 'Doing Business' scale. The protection of investors indicator which requires a robust judicial environment, moved from 147 to 100.



Prosecution and police training programme for the East Africa region

Between 2011 and 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat has developed an innovative programme to equip investigators and prosecutors with the skills needed for dealing with transnational crimes, particularly those relating to corruption. The programme follows a pilot in the Asia-Pacific region conducted in 2009. It was developed with three components:

The first component is an online collaborative component with relevant agencies and experts to produce training modules in specialist skills for prosecutors and investigators; the second component is a face-to-face workshop for participants and experts, who deliver a joint outcome plan and national action plans; and the third are in-country national mentoring programmes.

These programmes took place in Mauritius, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Public prosecution directors in each jurisdiction led the national mentoring programmes. They provided the opportunity to cement the training and roll it out to more officials than was possible in the initial programme. Over 180 prosecutors and police officers have benefited from this.

The Pacific Prosecutors Association, which resulted from the Commonwealth Secretariat's initial pilot in the Asia-Pacific region, is now a self-sustaining body that has become a significant convening partner providing a network for prosecutors to discuss challenges faced by their criminal justice systems.

Judicial education

Judicial education is crucial to promoting judicial independence which is an essential element of the rule of law. The Commonwealth Secretariat has worked closely with judiciaries to assist them with conducting judicial education. Judicial seminars have been held in Belize, Cameroon, Kiribati, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Seychelles and Zambia. In each case, the topics under discussion have been selected in consultation with the judiciary concerned.

Anti-corruption, tackling money laundering, and addressing trans-national crimes

The Commonwealth Secretariat has developed legal tools for practitioners and training for police, prosecutors and judges on anti-corruption measures, money laundering, terrorism and other transnational crimes. The Commonwealth Secretariat has also facilitated inter-country training placements for prosecutors on the recovery of stolen assets, which removes the profit that motivates corruption.

In addition, Commonwealth member countries have benefited from skills development and legal tools on international co-operation to combat transnational corruption and related offences. An example of this is the model legislation based on the Harare Scheme that can be used as a basis to develop national law. The Commonwealth Secretariat also facilitates networking among justice sector officials and agencies. The Commonwealth Secretariat supported the creation in 2011 of the Caribbean Prosecutors Association and helped establish the Pacific Prosecutors Association in 2009. These associations complement other networks that are designed specifically to create contact points on international co-operation in each jurisdiction, such as the Commonwealth Network of Contact Persons.

"The setting up of the Asset Recovery Unit is another example of the fruitful engagement between my office and that of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Asset Recovery Act was enacted last year leading to the creation of an Enforcement Authority vested with powers to forfeit proceeds of crime. We are now working with other countries in the Africa region to share experience and assist in establishing their own Units. This is a remarkable achievement which is largely due to the assistance received from the Secretariat which guided us thorough this uncharted territory."

Mr Satyajit Boolell
Director of Public Prosecutions
Mauritius

Promoting peace and security through international humanitarian law

29 May is recognised as the International Day of UN Peacekeepers – when men and women who serve in peacekeeping operations are honoured for their work in war zones. The Commonwealth Secretariat's programme on international humanitarian law is contributing to their efforts by developing laws and building the skills and knowledge of military lawyers to train those who operate in conflict areas. The programme also aims to protect victims of these conflicts by developing laws for the police, prosecutors and judges to ensure that those who commit crimes such as genocide and rape are held accountable. The Commonwealth Secretariat is also supporting governments of post-conflict countries such as Sierra Leone to raise awareness and avoid political tension, which is a precursor to conflict.

"The training and knowledge gained from the Commonwealth training programme on international humanitarian law has helped and is being used in the training of our troops before deployment on UN assignment elsewhere, recently Somalia and now for consideration in Mali."

Major Andrew H Kamara
Acting Director of Defence (Legal)
Sierra Leone

Research, technical tools, and the promotion of access to legal information

In addition to providing direct technical assistance and strengthening institutional capacity, the Commonwealth Secretariat undertakes research and produces materials to increase access to legal information in Commonwealth jurisdictions.

Handbooks on women's land rights have been produced to promote and protect equality under the law in Cameroon, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Updated versions of 'Commonwealth Strategies to Combat Corruption' and 'The Protection of Victims and Witnesses in the Criminal Justice System' were also released during this reporting period.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to produce and disseminate the flagship Commonwealth Law Bulletin, which has been published since 1974 and is now available online. The bulletin features topical articles and information on significant legal developments around the Commonwealth.

"The Prosecutor General's office continues to benefit from disseminated tools such as model legislation and best practice guides on various issues. This impact on knowledge and prosecutorial practice will help further our goals of effective prosecution services in Maldives."

Mr Ahmed Muizzu
Prosecutor-General
Maldives

Women's land rights

The Gender Section and the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat have collaborated to develop a significant body of work on women's land rights for four African members: Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The resulting handbooks focus on the judicial and administrative processes by which women acquire and realise their land rights. The handbooks were popularised in partnership with ActionAid International Sierra Leone, the Nigerian chapter of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Nigeria), and Samaritan House of Empowerment, Cameroon. They have been abridged and translated, and audio guides in local languages have been disseminated.

Training and advocacy targeting rural women, magistrates and land officials at the provincial level has taken place. The result is that awareness of women's access to and ownership of land has increased, including among lay magistrates and traditional authorities responsible for addressing the land rights issues.

Planned seminars expect to reach over 1,000 women in Yaoundé using the training and dissemination activities in the handbook. Cameroon's Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Family is working with women judges and the Ministry of Justice to develop a family code.

Delivery

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work on the Rule of Law is delivered primarily by its Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division. Work in this area is also carried out in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Political Affairs Division, the Human Rights Unit, and the Gender Section. It covers justice sector reform and includes cross-cutting areas of human rights and gender. Collaboration within the Commonwealth Secretariat has resulted in the development of best practice guides, model legislation, handbooks on women's land rights, and the revision of the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Terrorism. The Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division also partners with the Public Sector Development programme on the long-term placements of justice sector officials.

The programme uses novel delivery approaches to maximise resources and impact, while ensuring sustainability and avoiding duplication. An example is the Commonwealth's work in providing legislative drafters and placing judges and prosecutors. These interventions build on the Commonwealth Secretariat's comparative advantage at several levels, including its 'trusted partner' relationship with its member states. They also deliver longstanding expertise through training at the national level, and foster South-South relationships and peer exchange. A combination of theoretical and practical experience is also used to reach beneficiaries, including through online courses, toolkits, mentoring, placement referrals and workshops. A typical training programme is a strategic combination of theoretical knowledge and practical sessions by way of group work on a case scenario and moot trials.

Programming has been implemented with key strategic partnerships, such as the Offices of Directors of Public Prosecutions and anti-corruption agencies of member countries. This ensures ownership and sustainability. The Commonwealth Secretariat collaborates with international organisations such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and the International Monetary Fund, to ensure that best practice in the implementation of international conventions and protocols is disseminated to member countries. Commonwealth partner organisations such as the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute and the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association are also integral to the Commonwealth Secretariat's work on rule of law.

The programme uses novel delivery approaches to maximise resources and impact, while ensuring sustainability and avoiding duplication.

Human Rights

04

The Commonwealth is committed to engaging with member states to strengthen the respect, protection and promotion of human rights across its membership.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has built on its comparative advantage over the last two years, using its trusted partner relationship, convening power and a supportive and enabling approach to respond to needs of member countries. Between 2011 and 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered a series of interventions that have driven progress in rights protection and promotion. This has included strengthening member states' compliance with their human rights obligations and commitments as well as international standards through:

- Capacity development in relation to the Universal Periodic Review;
- Supporting the development of institutional frameworks for the promotion and protection of human rights, such as the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions;
- Enabling the exchange of best practice on key human rights concerns such as transitional justice mechanisms and post-conflict reconciliation; early and forced marriage; inclusive education for children with disabilities; and the rights of indigenous peoples;
- Raising awareness and promoting human rights education among stakeholders in Commonwealth member countries.

Highlights 2011-2013

- The Commonwealth Secretariat has provided capacity development to over 200 individuals from government, parliament, national human rights institutions and civil society to help them engage constructively with the UPR process;
- With the Commonwealth Secretariat's support, three additional countries have committed to establishing national human rights institutions that are compliant with the Paris Principles, a set of international standards which frame and guide the work of national human rights institutions;
- The Commonwealth Secretariat is providing support to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka to conduct its first national inquiry in compliance with international standards;
- The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions has been strengthened to support its work promoting networking, the sharing of information, experiences and best practices;
- More than 50 prison officials have received training in human rights in the Pacific and Africa regions;
- Youth trainers have been capacitated to train others in human rights and advocate for stronger rights promotion and protection.

Over the period under review, the Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered a portfolio of work that has built on the organisation's ability to engage and assist countries deliver on their human rights commitments. The Commonwealth Secretariat has also worked in other areas within this reporting period:

- In December 2012, a high-level panel discussion on 'Strengthened Rights Protection for Indigenous Peoples in the Commonwealth' brought together Permanent Missions from Commonwealth countries in Geneva seeking to engender constructive dialogue to build rafts of consensus towards better rights protection for indigenous people in the Commonwealth;
- In May 2013, the Human Rights Unit convened the Commonwealth Roundtable on Reconciliation to increase awareness and foster exchanges of best practice in regard to transitional justice and reconciliation in furtherance of the Civil Paths to Peace report. The Roundtable was attended by government representatives, civil society organisations and NHRIs from Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Northern Ireland (UK).

Ratification and adoption of international human rights instruments

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to assist member countries, particularly small states, with the process of ratifying the nine core human rights conventions[3]. This includes providing technical support for legislative change and policy developments in compliance with international human rights standards.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's programme of assistance on the Universal Periodic Review has also promoted the ratification agenda and some members have committed to and followed through on extending their ratification profile. The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to disseminate the 'Commonwealth Handbook on Ratification of Human Rights Instruments', which builds understanding about the steps involved in becoming a party to international human rights instruments and issues surrounding reservations and declarations.

[3] These are: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Convention on the Rights of the Child; International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Commonwealth facilitates Sri Lanka Human Rights Training

Support to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka complements national efforts to provide access for all its citizens to a life of dignity and opportunity in keeping with Commonwealth values.

The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka agreed to work on two immediate areas of technical assistance in 2013:

1. Strengthening the capacity of the Commission to enable use of national inquiries as a means for human rights protection; and subsequently supporting the first national inquiry.
2. Strengthening the Commission's role in taking forward national reconciliation efforts.

The technical assistance aims to boost the functional independence, effectiveness and authority of the Commission. This will ultimately work towards helping the Commission regain its 'A' status accreditation with the UN International Co-ordinating Committee for national human rights protection mechanisms.

National human rights institutions

A priority area for the Commonwealth Secretariat's work is providing technical assistance for the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in compliance with the UN Paris Principles. From 2011 to 2013, the organisation gave targeted assistance to three member governments for the establishment of NHRIs. It provided assistance to the strengthening of institutional compliance with the Paris Principles to two member governments. Technical assistance to develop a national human rights action plan was provided to the Government of Seychelles in 2012.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has taken advantage of existing best practices, particularly those originating from developing countries. In the case of the National Action Plan of Seychelles, the former chair of the National Human Rights Institution of Ghana was the expert resource person leading on this deployment.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to work with governments to strengthen the capacity of existing national human rights institutions, so that they are able to operate effectively and independently. Assisting these institutions to improve their capacity to promote and protect human rights is a priority for the Commonwealth, since it adds to the strengthening of national protection and oversight mechanisms.

The Commonwealth's 'Best Practice Guidelines on the Establishment of National Human Rights Institutions' has been used as the guiding framework to strengthen the institutional capacity of NHRIs and further rights protection and promotion in the national contexts.

The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and regional networks of human rights institutions have used Commonwealth Secretariat support to increase their sharing and exchange of best practices on human rights, pan-Commonwealth and regionally.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to work with governments to strengthen the capacity of existing national human rights institutions

Establishment, operationalisation and strengthening national human rights institutions

The Commonwealth Secretariat supported the establishment of the Swaziland Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration. It has provided technical assistance for a national consultative symposium on the establishment of the Commission. This involved drafting legislation for the Commission; a verification workshop on the draft legislation; and providing training for the new Commissioners.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has provided technical assistance towards the establishment of an independent national human rights institution in The Gambia. This included the facilitation of a national stakeholder consultation in May 2012, as well as an advisory on the draft legislation. It also organised a verification workshop on the draft legislation in August 2013. Similarly, the Commonwealth Secretariat is supporting the establishment of Barbados' National Human Rights Institution through the organisation of a colloquium with senior government officials in June 2012. It highlighted the importance, process and options of establishing a national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles.

Universal Periodic Review

The United Nations' Universal Periodic Review examines the human rights record of all 193 UN member states once every four and a half years. The Universal Periodic Review is a co-operative, state-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council. The Review provides the opportunity for each state to report on the implementation of its human rights obligations and receive recommendations from other states on how to advance human rights protection and promotion.

Between 2011 and 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat has worked to strengthen the capacities of member governments to participate in the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, with a focus on implementing outcomes from the review. In 2011, regional seminars for UPR follow-up and implementation of recommendations were held in Bangladesh, Barbados, Mauritius, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. They were attended by representatives from government, National Human Rights Institutions, Ombudsmen and civil society organisations. Assistance and support was also given to nineteen delegations as they presented their country reports under the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva.

In 2012, regional seminars to support member states in follow up and implementation in preparation for their second cycle reviews were organised in Europe, the Caribbean and Africa. The seminars engaged with 20 countries and 55 participants, drawn from government, parliament, NHRIs/Ombudsmen and civil society representatives.

Parliamentarians are key stakeholders in the UPR process; however their role is not formalised as yet. In November 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Inter-Parliamentary Union convened a seminar for parliamentarians on the implementation of UPR recommendations. This served to enhance the role of parliaments and their members in UPR reporting and implementation and to create a group of lawmakers to help facilitate the passage of legislation relevant to UPR recommendations. The seminar was targeted at parliamentarians from small island developing states which face the most severe obstacles to successful engagement, including human capacity constraints and technical-financial capacity limitations.

> The first regional seminar to develop the knowledge of parliamentarians on international, regional and national human rights mechanisms took place in Trinidad and Tobago

Subsequently the first regional seminar to develop the knowledge of parliamentarians on international, regional and national human rights mechanisms took place in Trinidad and Tobago in March 2013. The Secretariat's Human Rights Unit convened the seminar in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and with expertise from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. One of the key outcomes of this seminar was the establishment of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Human Rights Group. The mandate of this group supports the broad objectives of promoting networking, sharing information, experiences and best practices, and encouraging parliamentarians to strengthen their work to promote and protect human rights in the Caribbean and through human rights mechanisms such as the UPR.

Human rights education

Lack of awareness is a challenging barrier to strengthened protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights awareness and education is therefore fundamental for law enforcement agencies, public services, parliamentarians, human rights defenders, schools and young people.

During this reporting period, the Commonwealth Secretariat conducted a train-the-trainer programme for senior prison officials and training managers to strengthen human rights in prisoner care, custody and management. Using regional best practices in prison reform, the course encouraged penitentiary leadership to make a difference to the management of their prisons. Topics included the well-being of prison personnel; the rights of prisoners and what needs to be done to address difficult issues such as balancing security requirements alongside provision of measures for rehabilitation; provision of adequate healthcare for prisoners; and ensuring proper mechanisms for independent inspections of detention conditions.

Training youth workers to educate young people about their rights is another notable area of work, providing practical tools for under-30s to promote human rights values and respect for democracy, diversity and good governance in their countries. It increases their awareness of the national and regional human rights issues and builds their capacities to advocate for strengthened rights protection.

Delivery

The Commonwealth Secretariat's human rights work falls primarily under the remit of the Human Rights Programme, which is managed by the Human Rights Unit. Human rights work is also delivered through collaborations across the Commonwealth Secretariat, including with the Office of the Secretary-General, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division, the Political Affairs Division and the Youth Affairs Division.

The Commonwealth Secretariat also supports members with implementing human rights conventions after they have been ratified. This is often initiated at a regional level, but complemented nationally by technical assistance and capacity-building on a needs basis. The Commonwealth Secretariat's preferred option of delivery is a South-South best practice co-operation model. This is encouraged for the purposes of trust, increased ownership, and contribution to consensus building.

Human Rights work is delivered in tandem with strategic partnerships. The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with which the Commonwealth Secretariat has signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1998. In turn, OHCHR has sought to leverage the comparative advantage of the Commonwealth Secretariat with regard to its convening power in certain regions as well as the work it has done in strengthening the capacities of parliamentarians. Partnerships with non-governmental organisations such as Penal Reform International, Equitas and Plan UK are also pivotal to delivering outcomes.

Governance and Public Sector Development

05

Good governance and effective public service is dependent on transparency and accountability, and needs to be fully participatory and responsive to its citizens.

Many Commonwealth countries face unique challenges in their public sectors. The Commonwealth Secretariat's principal objective has been to advance good governance by assisting members to build public service capacity, strengthen their public institutions and improve service delivery.

Shared traditions of democracy, common law and public administration across the Commonwealth place the Commonwealth Secretariat in a position to deliver technical assistance and capacity-building that has the ability to close rather than fill gaps. The Commonwealth specialises in using South-South co-operation models and its unique multi-regional experience to address challenges faced by small and vulnerable states.

In the last two years, 35 member states and a range of regional bodies were assisted in areas of local governance, public finance, anti-corruption, public-private partnerships, and e-governance.

- In East Africa, training with the Tanzania Police Department resulted in clear improvements in service delivery, improved community policing and a reduction in crime figures.
- In Seychelles, Commonwealth Secretariat engagement enabled the Ministry of Local Government to develop policies on decentralisation, directly reshaping local government policy frameworks with increased efficiency and value for money.
- In Sierra Leone, the development and launch of a public web portal is enabling citizens to act as online 'watchdogs', thereby improving transparency and accountability.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has continued to provide support to strengthening the political-administrative interface between elected politicians and senior public officials.

Highlights 2011-2013

- Country collaborative approaches to fighting corruption resulted in the formation of the Association of African Anti-Corruption Agencies in 2011 and the launch of the Association's Anti-Corruption Centre in Botswana in February 2013.
- A conference on Public Administration in Very Small States in April 2013 enabled Commonwealth small states to share experiences and good governance practices tailored to their particular challenges. As a result, the Commonwealth Secretariat has partnered with Malta to provide training in public administration for very small states. It has also entered into a partnership with Microsoft to improve the delivery of public services to citizens, including through cloud-based services.
- The development of a training module for the Pacific to strengthen the interface between politicians and executives was rolled out in Tonga and Tuvalu in 2011 and 2012. The Tuvalu initiative has led to a partnership between the Commonwealth Secretariat and Asian Development Bank to strengthen strategic planning across government.
- Commonwealth assistance to the Ministry of Local Government in Sierra Leone has enabled the ministry to lead the decentralisation process, develop a coherent policy and co-ordinate contributions from international partners. This ensured that a context-sensitive approach was adopted, which considers key stakeholders from traditional governance institutions, such as local chiefs.

Improving the political administrative interface

An effective working relationship between elected politicians and senior public officials – known as the 'political administrative interface' – is a critical precondition for enabling good governance. The Commonwealth Secretariat works with governments by convening cabinet retreats, or workshops for ministers, principal secretaries and cabinet secretaries. These are often held shortly after an election to help prepare a newly elected government for power. They provide a safe space for discussions and peer learning on principles of good governance, the separation of powers, roles of ministers and principal secretaries, as well as strategies for collaboration between ministries.

Commonwealth countries have performed extremely well in recent governance indexes, with eight in the top 10 of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2012. In all six categories of the World Governance Index, the average performance of Commonwealth countries is significantly better than that of non-Commonwealth countries.

Increasing accountability and transparency

Between 2011 and 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat played a multi-faceted support role to increase accountability, integrity, transparency, predictability and participation in public sector decision-making and implementation. Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) experts have been assigned at various levels to assist governments with building institutional capacity in core areas.

In Lesotho, CFTC-funded legal expertise has led to greater confidence by investors and an increased sense of trust in the country's leadership. This follows inputs to strengthen the Directorate of Corruption and Economic Offences including the amendment of Lesotho's Prevention of Corruption Bill. In Nigeria, technical assistance to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Academy resulted in a sharper, more effective and diversified use of the latest anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures, with particular focus on intelligence-driven investigation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has prioritised anti-corruption work to strengthen good governance and promote accountability and integrity in the Commonwealth. This has involved mobilising all key agencies involved in monitoring, detecting and responding to corruption-related issues. In-country anti-corruption projects began in the Commonwealth African countries of Botswana, The Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zambia. It has since expanded to the Caribbean region to include Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

A new chapter in the battle against corruption in Africa

The year 2012 saw the establishment of the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre in Gaborone, Botswana, following a request to the Commonwealth Secretariat from the Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in 2011.

The Centre is a partnership between Botswana's Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime, the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Centre will provide training and research for all Commonwealth African countries, in areas such as investigations, public education, fraud prevention, forensics, prosecution and asset tracking.

The establishment of the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre is a tangible demonstration of the Commonwealth Secretariat's commitment to support its members' anti-corruption efforts. It has the potential for replication across the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has committed UK£1 million over the next four years (2013–2016) to the Centre.

"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 CAACC we are gathered here to launch."

Dr. Ponatsheo H K Kedikilwe, MP
Vice President of Botswana

ICTs for governance and citizen-centred development

The Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to promoting the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development. During this reporting period, it supported the strengthening of ICT across varied areas of governance and public sector development. In 2012, the Government of Sierra Leone launched a new online gateway aimed at increasing accountability, transparency and citizen participation in governance and development. The Transparency Sierra Leone Portal hopes to redefine the relationship between the state and citizen.

Increasing citizen participation: Transparency Sierra Leone

This project enables citizens to access key data on efforts to implement Sierra Leone's 'Agenda for Change' poverty reduction strategy. The online portal will encourage the delivery of more effective public services by empowering individuals and civil society to monitor and actively participate in the country's national development efforts.

The Commonwealth Secretariat provided funding and technical services to support the development and launch of the portal. The site harnesses the potential of blogs, forums and an 'Ideas Centre' to allow citizens to submit proposals, feedback and encourage public debate. By creating a reliable evidence base covering the full range of government activities, citizens can act as online 'watchdogs' – ensuring their rights are protected, projects are delivered as promised, and officials are held to account when funds are misspent.

Over the past few years, Sierra Leone has made impressive progress in the fight against corruption through efforts such as the Open Government Initiative, as well as the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission, both of

"Transformation requires aggressive collaboration and cooperation of many individuals, so as citizens, we all share the duty to transform Sierra Leone. Through TSL, we will help ensure the public trust, and establish a system of accountability, engagement and collaboration."

Dr Kaifala Marah
Sierra Leone Finance Minister

which benefited from the Commonwealth Secretariat's expertise and assistance. This progress is demonstrated by the steady improvement to the country's Transparency International anti-corruption score (from 1.99 in 2008 to 2.5 in 2011), and its rise on Ibrahim Index of African Governance (from 49th to 30th place).

The Commonwealth Secretariat's e-governance work has also progressed, with clear results. In Botswana, e-procurement is being introduced across government via an International Governance Solutions project to assist the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The project will enable Botswana to operate a comprehensive, decentralised public procurement system with electronic functions that will work in conjunction with other government systems.

The United Nations Public Administration Network's e-Government Index of 2012 ranked Seychelles as the number one e-government country in the African region. Citizens are able to obtain government services from their homes through the use of ICT.

Since 2006, the Commonwealth has been providing a wide-ranging package of assistance to Seychelles, covering strategy and policy development, capacity-building, and implementation. This has contributed to the development of a National ICT Strategy, followed by the implementation of internationally-recognised service management processes. An e-government strategy was developed in 2010 and implemented during 2010–2012. The Seychelles experience has been instrumental in the application of similar strategies in Swaziland, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Montserrat, all small states, where the benefits of e-government are amplified. The Seychelles case study was used to develop the Commonwealth Secretariat's e-Governance Handbook for Small States.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has also contributed to the development of ICT innovations to tackle cybercrime using a multi-stakeholder approach to build a consortium of specialised professionals.

Innovating through partnership: The Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative

The Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative draws on a range of international partners, including the Governments of Malta and the United Kingdom, as well as the COMNET Foundation for ICT Development. It aims to ensure member countries have appropriate legal frameworks in place and the investigative, technical, enforcement and prosecutorial capabilities to combat cybercrime.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's partnership with international organisations has been instrumental in bringing the consortium together while existing programmes of work and networks within government will be central to securing the political and administrative will to adopt and implement legislation and policies.

Strengthening local governance and fiscal decentralisation

The Commonwealth has continued to promote local government reforms as part of its commitment to democracy and development, and in pursuance of CHOGM mandates.

The programme has three strands:

- Support to governments implementing decentralisation strategies with a focus on least developed countries to assist in poverty reduction and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. National interventions are tailored to each country's development and political context.
- Fiscal decentralisation: Since 2005, the Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered a pan-Commonwealth programme on municipal finance in collaboration with the University of Birmingham. The programme exposes public officials to key issues in municipal finance and offers guidance on solutions, innovations and good practice from across the Commonwealth and beyond.
- Action and policy research on local government reform aims to equip the public sector in member countries to take informed decisions, bringing guidance and best-fit practices to the attention of public executives dealing with local governments.

Delivery

Work in Governance and Public Sector Development has been delivered primarily by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD). GIDD has led the Commonwealth Secretariat's Interdivisional Co-ordination Group, which facilitates regular sharing of information to improve the coherence, co-ordination and integration of assistance to members. The group also seeks to identify situations where the political environment is less conducive for development or technical assistance, and considers how to constructively engage with such members to overcome these barriers.

GIDD has acted as the driving force behind the Commonwealth Secretariat's Interdivisional Coordination Group – a cross-organisation body that facilitates regular sharing of information to improve the coherence, coordination and integration of assistance to members.

GIDD works in close partnership with all Commonwealth Secretariat's programme divisions in the development and delivery of technical assistance. This has included collaboration on economic development over the Conference on Public Administration in Very Small States in April 2013 and collaboration on rule of law on the Legislative Drafting Programme for Commonwealth Africa. GIDD also anchors ongoing co-operation with technical lead programme divisions under the Institutional Capacity Development Programme, which manages the placement of technical experts across several thematic areas.

The Public Sector Development Programme is grounded on the premise that development is a political process which cannot be imposed from outside. Identifying areas where the Commonwealth Secretariat is uniquely placed to make a difference, the programme saw its focus sharpen during the reporting period, away from training and capacity-building initiatives towards the following two major streams of work:

- Playing an enabling role at the centre of government, by creating and strengthening the political and bureaucratic environment to promote development; **and**
- Creating and nurturing networks and communities of practice, where the Commonwealth's advantage as a 'network of networks', as well its shared history of public administration, provides a unique opportunity for reform. This enables South-South learning and exchanges, and the sharing of 'best-fit', rather than externally imposed 'best-practice' solutions.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has organised 'retreats' – a safe space for confidential discussions and peer-learning, with distinguished regional political figures and senior public servants brought in to share their experiences. Such initiatives took place in Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Lesotho, Sri Lanka, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga and Tuvalu. This work is only possible due to the trust and convening power that the Commonwealth enjoys from its members, which allows it to access politically sensitive areas of government where other international organisations or bilateral donors cannot. At all times, these interventions are demand-driven and fully owned by governments. The Commonwealth Secretariat will continue to develop its programme in these two key work streams during the period of the new Strategic Plan (2013/14 – 2016/17).

Economic Development

06

Commonwealth members face many complex challenges in achieving sustainable economic development. Many small states and developing countries continue to struggle with a decline in global trade and investment. This is coupled with a lack of available information for investors and trading partners, and low capacity to harness growth opportunities. Between 2011 and 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat has continued to strengthen policies and systems that build resilience and support inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. The Commonwealth has used its economically diverse membership to help build consensus around development concerns.

Global economic challenges have remained at the forefront of the Commonwealth Secretariat's work. One of its largest portfolios, Responses and Proactive Engagement, covers two broad areas: finance and financial sector development; and economic development. Work during the reporting period covered financial literacy, debt management, support for trade policy and trade negotiations, facilitation and export promotion and enterprise. A major part of the Commonwealth Secretariat's engagement in this area is tailored to the needs of small and vulnerable member states.

Building on longstanding areas of expertise, the Commonwealth Secretariat uses its established relationships with member states, regional bodies and other partners to implement its work. During the 2011 to 2013 period, the organisation delivered economic development programming across all regions of the Commonwealth through advocacy, technical assistance, research and evidence, and capacity-building. This has yielded diverse results, notably the expansion of the Commonwealth Secretariat's robust debt-management project, increased financial literacy programming, and ongoing support to member states to develop effective policy mechanisms for integration and participation in the global trading system.

Highlights 2011-2013

- Commonwealth perspectives and concerns have been reflected in the G20 Development Working Group deliberations on food security, building green economies, growth with resilience and financial inclusion.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat launched a major report titled 'The Right to Trade: Rethinking the Aid for Trade Initiative', co-authored by Joseph Stiglitz, in a workshop in Geneva in June 2013. The report has triggered a serious policy discourse on the related issues.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat participated in the Fourth Global Review of Aid for Trade in July 2013 and launched a comprehensive publication titled Aid for Trade: Effectiveness, Current Issues and Future Directions. This volume, with contributions by 20 renowned experts from a range of international organisations, think tanks and academic institutions, provides a comprehensive review of the Aid for Trade initiative and offers recommendations to make it more effective for least developed countries, small vulnerable economies and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat drafted and presented the Pacific Island Countries' Aid for Trade Strategy at a Regional Workshop on Aid for Trade held in Fiji from 21-24 May 2013, where the report was endorsed for circulation to capitals and donors.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat has collaborated with the University of Oxford to prepare and publish a path-breaking trade negotiating guide. Negotiating Against the Odds: A Guide for Trade Negotiators from Developing Countries has been hailed by academic scholars and senior policy-makers as a 'must read' for negotiators from developing countries. This publication is an example of the Commonwealth Secretariat's ongoing efforts to promote capacity-building among the smallest and poorest countries' policy-makers.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat has produced a practical handbook, titled Integrating Sustainable Development into International Investment Agreements: A Guide for Developing Countries, to help enable capacity constrained member countries to design international investment agreements that support their development needs. Since being launched in the Caribbean and Pacific regions in late 2012, the handbook has been endorsed and is being widely utilised as negotiating guide and a postgraduate teaching tool in law and economics in a number of universities.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat has undertaken and successfully shared its analytical work on development policies and good practices for promoting regional supply chains and global services value chains.
- In July 2012, in Jamaica, experts and policy-makers from small states shared experiences on migration and economic planning with a view to strengthening the role of the diaspora in economic growth.
- The Global Biennial Small States Meeting which took place in 2012 focused on equitable growth opportunities from migration and the diaspora, to tourism, and regional integration, leading inter alia to close collaboration with the World Bank on building tourism in small states.
- A 10-year review of small states and the Millennium Development Goals revealed a large divide between countries in their attainment of these Millennium Development Goals, but also a critical lack of data to help them gauge their progress.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat undertook preparatory work for major World Trade Organization events: the WTO ministerial conference held in 2011 and the upcoming meeting in December 2013. The Commonwealth Secretariat provided support to member states in the form of analytical papers and consultative meetings.

Maritime boundaries and ocean governance

For over 25 years, the Commonwealth has provided assistance on the delimitation of maritime boundaries and issues related to the law of the sea and the management of natural resources.

In the last two years, the Commonwealth Secretariat successfully assisted 15 member states on maritime boundary negotiations. This included aid to countries across the Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa at both national and regional levels. This resulted in high negotiated settlements for Commonwealth countries, and included a successful extended continental submission to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLOS). Countries have also benefited by being more closely aligned to international legislation on maritime boundaries.

Building on success: Maritime boundaries and ocean governance

The Commonwealth Secretariat's prolific work in this area has resulted in a variety of outputs and outcomes at different stages of impact. These include the submission by Bangladesh to the UNCLOS; boundary agreements between Commonwealth Pacific member states; maritime boundary negotiations between Commonwealth Caribbean states and their non-Commonwealth neighbours; and the provision of legal and technical advice to Kenya and Ghana on boundary settlements with their respective non-Commonwealth neighbours.

A joint management agreement between Mauritius and Seychelles enabled both countries to exercise sovereign rights over living and non-living natural resources on or under the seabed. The Commonwealth Secretariat has also supported the development of national and regional policy frameworks for Maritime and Ocean Governance. Access to marine resources, which are critical to economic and social development, has been incorporated into the Commonwealth Secretariat's body of work in this area. Following the development of an Ocean Governance Strategy in 2011, the Commonwealth is leading on the development and implementation of a new approach to ocean governance by co-ordinating activities in different sectors and connected zones. The new framework considers on a series of actions, including moving the current debate from one focused on the costs of marine protection to one about economic growth, social and environmental goals, and the contribution that ocean goods and services can play in delivering sustainable development.

Natural resources

Assistance over three decades on natural resource management is also an area in which the Commonwealth Secretariat has demonstrated its comparative advantage. In the last two years, the Commonwealth Secretariat has assisted 14 member states on sustainable extractive industries exploitation for economic development, at various stages of the value chain. The interventions have ranged from the preparation of policy, legislative and contractual arrangements for the governance of extractive industries development, to the successful negotiation of investment terms that have culminated in commercial discoveries of natural gas.

Extractive industries development

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work on extractive industries development resulted in a successful programme of assistance to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania in negotiations with private investors. This led to the conclusion of a commercial package that provided the foundation for the first significant offshore natural gas discoveries in Tanzania.

The Commonwealth's first Natural Resources Forum in enabled members to share and learn critical issues in the management of natural resources. Pakistan's National Mineral Policy, which serves as the foundation upon which sustainable extraction and production of the country's mineral resources will be managed, was published with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The implementation of a promotion and licensing scheme for offshore petroleum development in the Seychelles and Mauritius was successfully delivered.

Debt management

The Commonwealth Secretariat provides advice on developing sound debt management policies, strategies and operations. Its programme of assistance enables governments to manage various types of debt more effectively and to evaluate the impact of new borrowings and the projection of market variables on sovereign debt. From 2011 to 2013, Commonwealth assistance in this area resulted in policy change and institutional strengthening at the national level. Innovations have also been added to the Commonwealth Secretariat's highly-regarded debt management software.

Strengthening debt management – holistic reforms in Jamaica

Commonwealth Secretariat policy advice has been instrumental in strengthening Jamaica's capacity to manage debt following policy, institutional and legal reforms that have been put in place by the Ministry of Finance and the public service during the last three years. The Commonwealth Secretariat's advice facilitated the completion of the market-led National Debt Exchange process, which concluded in March 2013. The debt exchange had a high participation rate of 98 per cent from domestic bond holders. Debt restructuring will result in an annual cost savings of Jamaican $19 million and reduce the public debt burden by 8.5 per cent of its GDP by 2020.

Earlier, policy support from the Commonwealth Secretariat facilitated the establishment of a re-organised Debt Management Office and the enactment of a comprehensive Public Debt Management Act that promotes prudent debt management and governance. Commonwealth Secretariat support also paved the way for efficient public financial management through the establishment of a Central Treasury Management System.

Horizon: Planning the future of Commonwealth sovereign debt

Horizon is an innovative, software tool for countries seeking to undertake prudent sovereign debt management. It offers key services to manage risk, plan funding and support debt restructuring. The system was successfully piloted by the National Treasury of South Africa and is being used regularly as part of their strategic debt management objectives. Horizon is ready to be deployed in member states and is expected to strengthen, significantly, their risk management capabilities and planning of sovereign debt operations.

The Commonwealth now provides a complete suite on debt management, attending to the entire cycle of business processes. Horizon complements the globally renowned Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS) developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat in the 1980s, and the Securities Auctioning System (CS-SAS) released in 2008. In 2012, Trinidad and Tobago became the 61st country globally to use CS-DRMS for public debt management.

Development of government securities markets: Ensuring sustainable access to finance

The Commonwealth Secretariat has initiated work to advise member states on how to develop their government securities market. This will ensure governments find a sustainable, cheaper and less risky source of financing for their development expenditure. Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Tonga have benefited from such detailed policy advice in the past two years while assistance to Sri Lanka will be rolled out shortly.

Beneficiary countries have begun implementing reform measures to develop a broad and deep domestic debt market. Some of the countries are already realising the benefits associated with a vibrant debt market. Following a switch from issuing 91-day Treasury Bills to 364-days Bills in Sierra Leone, the yields on 91-day T Bills declined three times to 6 per cent thereby resulting in significant savings on interest costs. In Swaziland, the bond issuance programme is being revived after a gap of two years.

Finance, growth and investment

The Commonwealth's work on finance, growth, and investment includes the placement of long-term experts in core positions at national and regional level.

Promoting the concerns of small and vulnerable states at the G20

In collaboration with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) the Commonwealth Secretariat has engaged in a series of high-level dialogues that have augmented Commonwealth influence within the G20 through active engagement within the G20 Development Working Group.

This follows recognition by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meetings in 2009 and 2011 of the importance of promoting dialogue and sharing information between the Commonwealth and the G20.

Decisions made within the G20 particularly affect the policies of the Commonwealth's 32 small states, 16 least developed countries and 18 Sub-Saharan African members. Collaboration by the Commonwealth's five G20 members has strengthened intra-Commonwealth relations and provided a tangible bridge for the development priorities of the membership's poorest, smallest and most vulnerable members to be communicated to the wider G20 membership.

This intervention has resulted in their perspectives and concerns being reflected in the G20 Development Working Group's deliberations on growth with resilience, food security, building green economies, financial inclusion as well as several issues of policy priority to the respective G20 Presidencies from 2010–2013. It has additionally forged practical new relationships at a technical level:

- Commonwealth policy recommendations on trade were discussed at the World Trade Organization in December 2011, examining the option to expand duty-free and quota-free access to wider number of countries.
- Commonwealth recommendations around scaling-up aid for trade have been taken up more consistently within international debates.
- Recommendations around growth and resilience in small states are being taken forward more widely since the Commonwealth's proposals to the G20.

Financial literacy

Between 2011 and 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat strengthened its financial literacy portfolio, with the addition of Commonwealth-designed Training of Trainers modules. This has resulted in programmes being embedded in Africa, the Pacific, and the Caribbean. Following Training of Trainers programming in Ghana, approximately 77,000 young people were reached through 89 high schools in three regions. Nearly 700 accounts were opened by young participants.

In Vanuatu, Commonwealth financial literacy programming has reached in excess of 4,000 rural villagers, with over 3,000 new accounts opened.

In St Kitts and Nevis, the Commonwealth's training module has resulted in an additional 300 financial literacy trainers being appropriately skilled across the Eastern Caribbean. Financial literacy materials produced by the Commonwealth Secretariat have been widely reproduced and disseminated, while demand has led to translations into Bengali, Swahili, and Braille, with Singhalese and Divehi translations being considered by authorities.

Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative delivers tangible growth and diversification of the private equity industry in Africa and the Pacific

An independent evaluation of Phase II of the Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative (CPII 2) between 2005–2010 was delivered in 2012, with the findings concluding that the programme was effective and had delivered impact for investments in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in emerging markets.

Support was provided for the development and delivery of Private Equity Funds in target markets through a partnership with Aureos. CPII 2 was rated highly in demonstrating its 'proof of concept' in that SME investments in emerging markets can deliver profitable and sustainable returns using principles of good governance.

US$340m

Aureos had more than US$340 million invested in Africa.

The programme's effectiveness is demonstrated through the geographic spread of the funds, which have moved into countries with smaller economies and riskier profiles in Africa and the Pacific, and through the broad range of sectors in which the funds have been invested.

The overall impact of CPII 2 can be seen in the growth and diversification of the private equity industry in Africa, in particular. In 2010, Aureos had more than US$340 million invested in Africa. Its investors paid about US$215 million in taxes, earned US$104 million in foreign exchange and employed over 32,000 people.

Trade, export competitiveness and enterprise development

The Commonwealth Secretariat's support from 2011 to 2013 included trade negotiation and facilitation, export competitiveness and enterprise development. This has included the placement of experts at the national and regional levels, engagement with the World Trade Organization, and the development and dissemination of publications and tools for member states to understand and own the processes involved. Important backing has been provided to Commonwealth member states to participate in WTO negotiations and more generally to enhance their participation in the multilateral trading system.

Specific analytical work has informed small states and least developed countries on strategic options in WTO negotiations, and on ways to enhance their participation in the multilateral trading system and face future trade-related challenges. Examples of this include consultative meetings and workshops organised in London, Geneva, and South-East Asia to support the preparatory process to the upcoming WTO ministerial meeting in December 2013.

The Trade Adviser based in the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva has provided direct support and major work has been undertaken on aid for trade, culminating in two publications on the topic. In addition, two publications on trade and investment agreement negotiations were successfully launched and disseminated. Technical workshops were organised on trade negotiations at the regional level in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work on trade competitiveness has focused on services exports that include professional and tourism services; non-primary commodity exports and private sector development. Examples of the work undertaken over the two years include assistance to:

- Jamaica to develop its health and wellness sector;
- Barbados to develop sports tourism as a means of diversifying its tourism sector;
- Uganda to increase its access to the UK market for its organic exports; and
- Botswana to improve the business environment for private sector growth.

Preparing Seychelles' roadmap to WTO accession

Provision of a Trade Adviser to the Seychelles Department of Trade and a legislative drafter (Trade) to the Attorney-General's Office has placed the country on a clear and better-informed road to WTO accession. Seychelles received support from the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva where it maintains an office.

A roadmap to WTO access has been agreed, and accession legislation has been identified for drafting. The Seychelles Department of Trade has benefited from staff training and has been mentored in accession negotiation.

This has boosted Seychelles' policy and research capacity, notably within the Ministry of Finance and Trade and has better equipped the government to conduct international trade negotiations. The training, coupled with the early accession, should enable Seychelles to attain favourable terms.

Market access for Uganda's organic agricultural exporters

Ugandan agriculture is almost entirely organically produced, yet only a limited range of produce is currently exported. A marketing plan for Ugandan organic agricultural exporters to access the United Kingdom market was devised in partnership with the National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda. The implementation of the marketing plan resulted in Ugandan small and medium enterprises in the organic sector initiating contact with UK buyers through the buyer/seller forum. Another significant outcome was the signing of a contract to supply 100 tons of ginger to the UK market. Crucially, Ugandan producers are now more conversant with international trading practices and standards across a range of market access issues such as packaging, branding and the submission of samples.

Jamaica takes steps to export health and wellness

The Commonwealth Secretariat has helped Jamaica explore the viability of developing its health and wellness sector in order to attract more investment in areas with the greatest potential for job creation and export earnings. Working with a Cabinet-appointed task force, a Health and Wellness Development Plan was prepared, identifying a number of priority sub-sectors and outlining specific activities as well as lead agencies. Following Cabinet approval of the plan, relevant executive agencies embarked on its implementation. The national trade and investment promotion agency, the Jamaica Promotions Corporation has secured investment in a five-star medical tourism facility. The organisation has also used the plan to secure resources from local and international partners to implement other priority areas.

Economically empowering women and youth

Targeted economic development approaches for women and young people are a core aspect of the Commonwealth Secretariat's work. Young people are an important demographic within the Commonwealth Secretariat's financial literacy programming, while youth programming has contributed to greater numbers of young people engaged in employment. The Commonwealth Secretariat's commitment to gender and economic empowerment covers trade and enterprise development, access to finance, and gender responsive investments and budgeting. More recently, the Commonwealth Secretariat has started developing a body of evidence in the area of gender responsive investment.

Commonwealth capacity-building on savings and credit organisations has targeted community-based self-help organisations and formal financial institutions that have a substantial 'women in business' funding window. Following the establishment of a networking group for Savings and Credit Officials on the Commonwealth Secretariat's electronic professional sharing platform, Commonwealth Connects, all documents have been made available to participants who are now active on the site's information and discussion boards.

National-level capacity-building has begun in some countries following the initial training. A country-wide event for savings and credit organisations to share lessons learnt from India took place in Nigeria, and a seminar for all stakeholders in the savings and credit organisations network in Cameroon was delivered. Participants from Australia developed an action plan to institute changes in an organisation that mainly supports indigenous people. These are now being implemented.

Gender responsive investment: Developing the evidence base

Gender Responsive Investment (GRI) facilitates access to finance for women and capital flows to women-owned enterprises. GRI contributes to women's economic empowerment and supports the contraction of gender gaps generally, particularly in employment. Governments have a critical role to play in creating an enabling environment that supports financial inclusivity for women, while institutions can achieve greater outreach to women by understanding women's markets and providing innovative products and services that meet their needs.

In response to this, the Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered a series of GRI interventions, pushing the boundaries of research in order to assist member states understand and utilise the links and implications of growth and development policies that are pro-poor and gender equitable. Following an initial 'State of GRI Report' focusing on GRI for formal sector small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a GRI handbook was published in 2013 for guiding policy-makers and practitioners. Baseline studies on savings and credit organisations that are owned or managed by women were also carried out in South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda and India.

Delivery

Over the period 2011 to 2013, work in this area was delivered primarily under the Economic Development Programme, across two of the Commonwealth Secretariat's divisions: the Economic Affairs Division, and the Special Advisory Services Division. The Gender Section and the Youth Affairs Division have also contributed to economic development programming. Long-term technical expertise has been deployed following requests through the work of the Technical Co-operation and Strategic Response Unit, based in the Commonwealth Secretariat's Governance and Institutional Development Division.

Collaborative approaches include exchanges between in-house technical advisers on projects; co-operation between the Economic Affairs and the Governance and Institutional Development divisions around the G20; and a women's enterprise development project in 2012, delivered by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Section, with the support of the Special Advisory Services Division.

Models of delivery throughout the programme covered a wide range of approaches offered at different levels of engagement.

Models of delivery throughout the programme covered a wide range of approaches offered at different levels of engagement. Commonwealth Secretariat divisions have designed initiatives in response to identified policy gaps, ministerial mandates, and trends analysis of member needs. During the 2011–2013 period, this included high-level advocacy work in preparation for Rio+20 and the technical development of the Horizon debt management system.

Strategic partnerships with external organisations have added significant value to the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat, allowing the programme to maximise its resources and provide a stronger footprint beyond the membership. The partnership with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie is one example of this. Partnerships with regional and national institutions are also integral to the sustainability of the technical assistance delivered, such as the relationship with the National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda in providing greater market access for Ugandan small and medium enterprises.

Commonwealth Secretariat assistance can be instrumental in helping member countries forge further partnerships: Caribbean Community countries (including Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago) are leveraging resources from regional programmes such as the Caribbean Aid for Trade and Regional Integration Trust Fund to implement strategic plans to promote professional services developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Environmentally Sustainable Development

07

The Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to assisting member countries manage their risk and identify opportunities for environmentally-sustainable growth targeted at the most poor and vulnerable. Three challenges addressed in 2011 to 2013 were climate finance, the development of green economies and rapid urbanisation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work in this area encompassed analytical research, partnership-building and skills-building. In the Caribbean and Pacific regions, expert advice on cost benefit analysis helped countries evaluate actions to build their resilience to climate change. At the international level, support to small states for Rio+20 helped highlight concerns around climate finance, green growth and sustainable development. New work has also been initiated following recommendations by the Expert Group on Climate Finance.

Highlights 2011-2013

- The establishment of an Expert Group on Climate Finance to reveal the challenges that small and vulnerable states face in accessing and disbursing climate finance and exploring concrete proposals for action.
- Deeper understanding of what is needed for small states' transformation to a Green Economy, highlighting their key concerns and policy approaches.
- Support to the Caribbean and Pacific Regions in the cost benefit analysis of climate change actions.

Climate Finance

The Commonwealth Secretariat took significant steps during 2011–2013 to apply its expertise to developing a body of evidence that will provide members with the knowledge and capacity to access climate finance. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, under the auspices of his Good Offices for the Environment role, established a Commonwealth Expert Group on Climate Finance, chaired by the former President of Guyana, Bharrat Jagdeo.

In June 2013, a call for evidence on improving frameworks for climate finance was issued. With several Commonwealth countries already identifying and embarking on pathways for low-emission and climate resilient development, the call explored questions and good practices around unlocking and delivering results from available global climate change financing.

The Expert Group examined:

- How climate financing is being accessed by, and disbursed to, small and vulnerable countries, and what more can be done to unlock existing and new sources of finance;
- Options for enhancing the effectiveness of climate finance, looking at systems, capacities, mechanisms or other enabling conditions that can help increase availability and effectiveness at national and regional levels; and
- How global advocacy and political leadership can be used as a mechanism for brokering solutions and facilitating improved flows of climate finance to Commonwealth small and vulnerable states.

The Expert Group is identifying concrete and practical actions for improved access to climate finance by Commonwealth small and vulnerable states. These will be presented to Heads at CHOGM 2013 in November.

Building resilience and sustainable development

In 2004, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the University of Malta, developed a well-respected resilience index and framework. In the lead up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 2014, the Commonwealth Secretariat is convening a Technical Working Group to revisit the resilience agenda, looking at both the national policy framework (going beyond indicators) and the international (including South-South) financing and capacity agenda to support resilience building, to strengthen its use for driving investments in resilience in small states.

Eight cases studies and a summary report on efforts by small states on the transformation to a green economy were commissioned on Botswana, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Mauritius, Nauru, Samoa and Seychelles. The Guyana case study examined the interface between gender, local communities and the green economy. The findings were disseminated internationally through a Commonwealth Secretariat presentation at a regional workshop in the Indian Ocean on the green economy organised the Government of Mauritius, UNEP, the IOC, and UNDP in October 2012.

As part of the Commonwealth Secretariat's broader engagement with the G20, the needs of the poorest, smallest and most vulnerable member countries on green growth were highlighted at an outreach meeting with the G20 Development Working Group in April 2012.

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Strategic partnerships for small and vulnerable states on climate change

The Commonwealth Secretariat strengthened its strategic partnership with the regional institutions of small states – the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme – to build institutional capacities in sustainable development and climate financing.

This included joint meetings to explore a common platform of action and the placement of CFTC advisers supporting cost-benefit analysis of climate change actions in the Caribbean and Pacific.

An exchange of experts between the regions; uptake by the Indian Ocean Commission of the Commonwealth's vulnerability and resilience methodology which has also been adapted for use by UN agencies; and the roll out of an online training course tailored to small states on the International Architecture for Environment and Sustainable Development in the Indian Ocean is in the pipeline.

The course has been translated into French and will be delivered ahead of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa in 2014. This follows a successful completion of the course across all three regions in 2011/12, when it was offered in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning Virtual University for Small States, the University of the West Indies, the University of the South Pacific, and the University of the Seychelles ahead of the Rio+20 conference. At the June 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the partnership highlighted the special and unique challenges faced by these countries through a side event and advocacy video which was widely distributed. The event also entailed signature of Memorandums of Understanding between the regional organisations.

The Commonwealth Secretariat organised a strategy meeting for the Climate Vulnerable Forum in September 2011 that focused on the priority concerns of small states within the current climate change negotiations. This helped to facilitate a productive meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum in Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2011. The Forum itself included 10 vulnerable countries, and Bangladesh highlighted outcomes at the plenary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-17).

At national level, an adviser deployed to the Ministry of Economic Planning and National Development in St Lucia helped to deliver a detailed framework for a National Sustainable Development Strategy. A study of the country's Public Sector Investment Plan system

Dhaka, Bangladesh
Venue for the Climate Vulnerable Forum, November 2011

and a review of the Medium Term Strategic Development Plans for core sectors have also been completed to support a strategic shift towards sustainability in national development planning.

The Commonwealth Secretariat organised a strategy meeting for the Climate Vulnerable Forum in September 2011 that focused on the priority concerns of small states within the current climate change negotiations.

A Meteorological and Climate Adviser was deployed to the SPREP who facilitated the signing of a Finnish-Pacific Project to improve national weather and climate services. This deployment also supported the Pacific Meteorology Council to improve co-ordination between National Meteorological Services in the region, and resulted in the publication of SPREP's Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) 2012–2021. A partnership between SPREP and the Finnish MFA and National Meteorological Institute was established, and is helping to reduce the vulnerability of villagers' livelihoods to the effects of climate change. The 2012–2021 PIMS Strategy is now being implemented.

Implementation of a cost-benefit analysis work plan for SPREP is now complete and a regional group on climate change adaptation planning has been established following deployment of an Environmental Resource Economist. Seven cost-benefit analyses pilot projects under the Pacific Adaption to Climate Change programme are underway, along with stakeholder workshops. Interest in the use of cost-benefit analyses has increased across the region, with several further requests for training.

Caribbean region strengthens preparations for achieving development that is resilient to climate change

A full time Environmental and Resource Economist has been deployed to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre since 2008. This has strengthened the Centre's capacity by supporting a review on the economics of climate change in the Caribbean, building partnerships and capacity with regional universities on climate change, and undertaking a number of studies on the impact of climate change and various mitigation techniques.

Support was also given to regional negotiators at and following Rio+20 and in preparation for the UN Conference of the Parties (COP-18) in Doha.

As a result of this intervention, at least 15 countries are more cognisant about the impacts of climate change on their most important sectors and economies. At least 10 countries will be developing national climate change or low carbon development strategies and will climate proof their development plans and sector programmes. At least 50 per cent of countries participating in the project have budget allocations specific to climate change and extreme events.

Partnerships have now been forged with major development agencies, securing funding of more than US$25 million with a further US$6 million committed; Climate Change Adaptation Analysis, technical support and skills for 15 Caribbean states; and development of the Regional Implementation Plan for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change (IP) 2011–2021.

Iwokrama

The Iwokrama Rainforest is a unique reserve that provides a dedicated site to test the concept of a truly sustainable forest where conservation, environmental balance and economic use can be mutually reinforcing. It has been managed since 1996 under a joint mandate between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Guyana. During this reporting period, the Commonwealth Secretariat completed a financial review of the Iwokrama International Centre, and liaised with member states and specific Washington-based institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank, to support the work of the Board of Trustees in placing the IIC on a secure financial footing.

Delivery

The Environmentally Sustainable Development Programme has been managed by the Economic Affairs Division, which works in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary-General, the Special Advisory Services Division and the Technical Cooperation and Strategic Response Unit.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's programme design and delivery mechanisms are driven by the organisation's focus on the needs of small and vulnerable member states in this area.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's programme design and delivery mechanisms are driven by the organisation's focus on the needs of small and vulnerable member states in this area. This has in turn led to the development of responsive approaches, including prioritising the recognition of small and vulnerable state concerns in international frameworks. CHOGM mandates around engagement with the Rio+20 have played major role guiding work in this area.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has pioneered research and supported direct expert placements that have boosted the capacity of member countries and their relevant regional bodies to engage and respond on resilience building, climate change and the green economy. By embedding training and systems through longer-term placements, the Commonwealth Secretariat is also upholding its remit to ensure that countries have greater ownership of these processes.

Human and Social Development: Health, Education, & Gender Equality

08

Education, health, and gender equality are intrinsic to sustainable human development. In the last two years, the Commonwealth Secretariat has continued to support Commonwealth countries to develop strategies and tools, and to use their public sector professionals more effectively for achieving globally agreed human and social development goals.

The Commonwealth's shared history has led to the creation of broadly similar social sector systems, and these in turn have provided a strong basis for the Commonwealth Secretariat to deliver interventions across its membership.

The Commonwealth's role is crucial for addressing policy gaps and generating new and pioneering evidence that takes forward the human and social development agenda. The Commonwealth Secretariat's work is delivered through three sections: Education, Health, and Gender.

While international assistance by major actors continues to concentrate primarily on direct delivery, the Commonwealth Secretariat utilises its convening power and trusted relationships with member countries and South-South knowledge transfer to address inadequate policy environments and knowledge management systems that can sometimes be neglected.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is a pioneer in developing new areas of work that have significant influence beyond its membership. For years, the organisation has been at the forefront of thought leadership on key challenges such as gender responsive budgeting and the international recruitment of teachers and health workers.

Highlights 2011-2013

- The Commonwealth Secretariat launched its Gender Equality Policy on International Women's Day 2012. It is currently developing the monitoring and reporting framework.
- The Commonwealth Education Ministerial Working Group's recommendations for the post-2015 development framework for education have gained international traction.
- The 10th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting Communiqué of June 2013 identified Commonwealth gender priorities post-2015. Ministers supported a twin-track approach to gender equality in the post-2015 development framework: a stand-alone goal to ensure that gender equality is an objective in its own right and the integration of gender in all other goals.

Promoting and strengthening e-Health

From 2011 to 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat broadened its e-health mandate to provide assistance to countries at regional and national levels. It developed a tool to assess the e-health status of Commonwealth countries in conjunction with templates for designing e-health policy and strategy.

The Commonwealth Secretariat started the process of e-health policy and strategy development at a regional consultation held in Kenya in 2011. As a result, the Kenyan Government was able to secure additional resources for developing its e-health strategy, which has since been launched. Kenya has worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat to share its experience with the wider Southern African region and to assist Southern African Development Community countries to draft e-health policies and strategies.

Kenya has worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat to share its experience with the wider Southern African region

In Maldives, the Commonwealth Secretariat provided technical assistance to develop a national e-health strategy. As a result, e-health interventions, strategies and investments have been significantly strengthened. This has enhanced the provision of quality, affordable, effective and accessible healthcare. Practical use of e-health has resulted in the introduction of telemedicine links between 40 islands.

E-health policy and strategy training has been delivered in Southern Africa and the Commonwealth Secretariat has also conducted dialogues in West Africa and South Asia.

Health

The Commonwealth recognises that health is central to the post-2015 development goals as it constitutes the basis for sustainable human development. The Commonwealth Secretariat's health and development agenda over the last two years has included key strands of work in e-health, mental health, maternal health, non-communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS. It has worked with member countries across all Commonwealth regions through varied approaches and strategic partnerships. The Commonwealth Secretariat has provided capacity-building, research, advice, and high-level engagement at the wider international level.

Delivery in priority areas continued during this reporting period and was aimed at building regional and national capacities to address policy gaps.

- With the support of UNAIDS, the Commonwealth Secretariat organised a consultation on improving access to treatment, prevention, care and support for countries in Africa with the highest prevalence rates.
- Workshops took place to facilitate the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and enhance advocacy and resource mobilisation in Tonga and The Gambia. These workshops were convened in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the West Africa Health Organisation respectively.
- Work around e-health has progressed significantly. Following a 2008 mandate from health ministers, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been supporting the exchange of e-health expertise between Commonwealth countries. It conducted regional e-health pilot interventions to examine the potential for e-health to influence socio-economic development across communities.

In St Lucia, the Commonwealth Secretariat facilitated the placement of a health workforce planning expert in the ministry of health to strengthen human resources management and development. This has contributed to improved professional standards and a new human resource management system.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has also supported midwife educators from 10 higher education institutions in Africa to improve the quality of midwife training. The adoption of a customised curriculum among regional and national higher education Institutions is underway. Malawi, Seychelles, Tanzania and Uganda have validated the curriculum and commenced training. Others, such as Swaziland and Zambia are in the process of adopting the curriculum.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has provided capacity-building, research, advice, and high-level engagement at the wider international level.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has raised awareness and gathered evidence on mental health issues in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Secretariat recognises that mental health disorders impact on social and economic development. A review of the status of mental health in the Commonwealth and its implications for global health targets was delivered at the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting in 2013. Findings demonstrated that despite great disparities in the availability of mental health services across the Commonwealth, there are many shared concerns around mental health. This is useful data for consideration by policy-makers and professionals, particularly in relation to the post-2015 health development goals.

Education

The Commonwealth Secretariat's portfolio on education has focused on countries' attainment of the Millennium Development Goals through priority areas such as professionalising the teaching workforce, gender equality, inclusive education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training. The Commonwealth Secretariat has played a crucial role in developing new areas of evidence and research that have been used extensively by members and other education specialists. It has also served to add Commonwealth perspectives to the post-2015 global education agenda.

In December 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat finalised the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group's recommendations for the post-2015 development framework for education. It presented these recommendations to the UK Prime Minister, who co-chairs the UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The recommendations were discussed at the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda in March 2013. They have gained global traction and were referred to in detail in the report of the Global Consultation that informed the UN High Level Panel.

New areas of work on gender equality in education during this reporting period included research in Maldives and Cameroon on gender responsive classroom processes in secondary schools. This research was commissioned to guide policy formulation and ensure teachers and schools engage in eliminating gender-biases in the learning process.

Over the past two years, the Commonwealth Secretariat has built on prior research on boys' underachievement and performance in education in the Caribbean. It is currently conducting a pilot project comprising three member states, Jamaica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago where national intervention strategies aimed at addressing different factors contributing to the underperformance of boys are being developed and implemented. The national intervention strategies will be consolidated into a regional strategy and shared with Commonwealth member states in the region.

There has also been significant progress in the area of post-secondary education and skills. This includes the development of a national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems assessment framework to review and compare the TVET systems to ensure their validity and relevance, and adaptation for use across the membership. The Commonwealth Secretariat contributed by identifying policy gaps and key issues faced by five countries: Bangladesh, The Gambia, Jamaica, Kenya and Papua New Guinea. Evidence indicated the need to carry out further work on delivery and assessment in their technical and vocational education and training programmes. An effective TVET system requires guidelines and standards that govern training, this includes appropriately qualified teachers and trainers, adequate facilities and resources, and quality assurance processes for assessment.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work on inclusive education focuses on reaching excluded groups which are sometimes not captured in education programming by major delivery partners. Using South-South experiences within Commonwealth Africa, work on quality education for nomadic populations has resulted in the development of comprehensive guidelines aimed at assisting members with delivering quality basic education to some of the Commonwealth's most marginalised communities. The Commonwealth Secretariat also initiated research for the Ministry of Education in Malawi on education for children and young people with albinism, a sizeable and heavily discriminated group within the country. On education for children with disabilities, the Commonwealth Secretariat facilitated a study which resulted in the 'Commonwealth Guide to Implementing Inclusive Education'. This focused on Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The guide outlines what should be done by different actors in the area of education and presents good practices across the Commonwealth for adaptation and replication.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work on the quality of education has focused on raising standards within the teaching profession and school leadership.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has built on the success of the 2004 Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol by developing a model memorandum of understanding for the recruitment of migrant teachers. This will help facilitate bilateral agreements between countries who wish to exchange teachers. The Education Section has designed a Standard Reporting Form for data on teacher migration to provide the entry point for countries to forecast and predict potential gaps in their teacher supply. The Commonwealth Secretariat has also been working with the Kenyan Ministry of Education to improve the institutional environment affecting refugee teachers.

Gender analysis of classroom processes in Maldives and Cameroon

Access to education is not the only gender barrier to achieving full and equal education in the Commonwealth. Even when enrolment has been achieved, the challenge of combating gender biases within education systems remains. These biases prevent equitable learning outcomes between boys and girls, and can also contribute to poorer quality education, increased drop-out rates and unfinished basic education. These challenges effectively negate the success of enrolment gains made by countries.

In 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned empirical research in Maldives and Cameroon to develop the evidence base on gender biases. This served to inform education ministries on the nature of the problems at classroom level, and what policy recommendations and direct interventions are needed to address them. The Millennium Development Goal on gender equality in education remains off-track, so this research comes at a time when stakeholders are attempting to understand the nuances. It also offers member countries and other partners an evidence base to shape and inform for programming.
The Commonwealth Secretariat is now working with both countries to implement work-plans based on the recommendations.

Professional standards for teachers and school leaders

The Pan-Commonwealth Framework on Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders contains core attributes such as knowledge, skills and values that teachers and school leaders must demonstrate in order to perform their professional duties effectively. This is an essential component for effective delivery of education policies. The Pan-Commonwealth Framework following consultations in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, has resulted in the development of regional frameworks. Subsequently, Maldives and Samoa have developed their professional standards and are now moving towards implementation, and Jamaica is already implementing their standards. In May 2013, Caribbean Community education ministers adopted the Caribbean Framework on Academic and Professional Standards thereby embracing the Commonwealth Secretariat initiative.

Higher institutional quality reviews in small states and post-conflict/conflict settings

Under an existing strategic partnership agreement with the Commonwealth of Learning, the Commonwealth Secretariat agreed to jointly undertake quality reviews of four universities over a two-year period, with a focus on institutions in small and vulnerable states, and institutions in post-conflict countries.

To date, reviews of the University of Guyana, and the National Institute of Health and Social Studies, Seychelles, have been completed. The findings demonstrated both common and varied challenges between the two universities, with different levels of effort needed to improve each institution.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has identified two institutions for conducting the next stage of reviews: the University of Jaffna in Sri Lanka; and Fatima Jinnah Women's University in Rawalpindi, Pakistan where access, quality and the delivery of education continue to hinder girls and women.

These reviews will help both universities to improve their management practices, strengthen internal systems, and enhance performance.

Gender Equality

The Commonwealth Secretariat has continued implementing the 2005–2015 Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality. In March 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched its Gender Equality Policy. This policy enables the organisation to take a systematic twin-track approach to gender mainstreaming across all divisions, and its work in member states. It sets out the Commonwealth Secretariat's commitment to promoting and embedding gender equality goals and provides a framework for the gender mainstreaming process. The Gender Section has also strengthened the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group and has developed a framework for the end-term review of plan of action implementation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered on critical areas of the plan of action across the Commonwealth through regional and national interventions. Strategic partnerships were formed with organisations and agencies including the UN Women, United Nations Population Fund, the Association of Women in Development, as well as with grassroots organisations at the national level.

Women's political participation was promoted under the Gender, Democracy, Peace and Conflict programme through advocacy and capacity-building. This included a high-level side event led by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago during the 66th UN General Assembly. Outcomes from this event were presented at the first women's dialogue in the margins of CHOGM in 2011, hosted by the Prime Minister of Australia under the theme 'Empowering Women to Lead'. An African regional colloquium in Ghana in March 2012 focused on building institutional capacity to advance women's leadership, and a series of publications on women's participation have also been published during this period.

The target of 30 per cent of women in cabinet, parliament and local government was achieved to some degree through affirmative action measures. At least 11 Commonwealth countries have reached the global target. These include Grenada, Guyana, Mozambique, New Zealand, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda. Rwanda tops the list with 56 per cent, closely followed by Seychelles at 43 per cent and South Africa with 42 per cent. At the local government level, almost a third of members have reached the global target with Lesotho leading with 49 per cent following legislative quotas in 2005. The Africa region ranks high in the number of women in governance, followed by the Caribbean and Asia regions.

The share of women heads of state and government remains very low, while women ministers stand at 20.9 per cent. In 2012, seven out of 20 women heads of state were from the Commonwealth namely, Prime Ministers Julia Gillard of Australia, Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago, Portia Simpson-Miller of Jamaica; and Presidents Pratibha Patil of India, Joyce Banda of Malawi, and Monique Ohsan-Bellepeau of Mauritius. In 2013 four are currently in government: Bangladesh, Malawi, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Work in the area of Human Rights and the Law has focused on reconciling local customs and practices with statutory laws and international human rights standards, addressing women's land rights and violence against women.[4]

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender, Poverty Eradication and Economic Empowerment work has addressed the feminisation of labour and poverty. It has aimed to influence fiscal and trade policies while also encompassing macro, meso and micro levels of economic development. During 2011 to 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat conducted research and capacity-building in the areas of gender responsive investments, trade and women's market access, as well as gender responsive budgeting.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's work on Gender and Trade is another area where expertise has been built over successive years, involving research and capacity-building of trade policy-makers and negotiators. The Commonwealth Secretariat's

[2] For more details on the Commonwealth Secretariat's work on women's land rights, see chapter 3 on Rule of Law.

Gender and Trade Action Guide has been translated into Arabic and published in 2013 by UN Women. In addition, the organisation has assisted with sensitising countries to the importance of developing a gender responsive export strategy. During 2012–2013, this work broke new ground in the area of gender, trade and procurement policy to identify how inclusive government procurement policy coupled with the effective management of resources can accelerate sustainable economic outcomes.

The final area of the plan of action focuses on Gender and HIV/AIDS. The work of the Commonwealth Secretariat in recent years has been driven by research for policy advocacy on HIV care and social protection. During 2011 to 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat furthered the evidence base in this area through the publications Who Cares: The Economics of Dignity, on unpaid HIV care work and human rights of carers, and Anticipatory Social Protection: Claiming Dignity and Rights, which proposes a framework for social protection interventions.

"It was an amazing opportunity for me. I was able to meet people who are interested in working with my company right from the design stage up to production. I plan to share what I have learnt with a lot of traders I know in the market. For instance I will be able to tell them the sizes and colours of the products that people are looking for in the UK."

Increasing women's access to international markets

In February 2012, Commonwealth women-owned businesses gained exposure to the international marketplace at an International Buyers Fair in the United Kingdom. Following training on marketing skills for the exhibition, a number of participants received significant orders and have since developed ongoing relationships with buyers, adding to the sustainability of their businesses. Kenyan businesswoman Jennifer Mulli penned an agreement to export crafts from her business 'Katchy Kollections' to the United Kingdom and believes she will now be able to double production within two years.

Some of the women were also able to identify new sources for suppliers, offering better quality inputs at cheaper prices.

Jennifer Mulli
Kenyan Entrepreneur

Delivery

Human and Social Development in the areas of Health, Education and Gender Equality fall primarily under the remit of the Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD). Collaborations with other programmes across the Commonwealth Secretariat have taken forward the gender cross-cutting theme into areas such as Rule of Law, Economic Development and Trade. The work on women's land rights and violence against women was delivered in collaboration with the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division, while the work on gender responsive investment/SACOs and market access was delivered in collaboration with the Special Advisory Services Division. A needs assessment for the placement of a gender expert in Trinidad and Tobago was completed with the Technical Co-operation and Strategic Response Group of the Governance and Institutional Development Division.

Ministerial mandates continue to guide the Commonwealth Secretariat's work. Delivery mechanisms take into account scale and funding limitations, but also the Commonwealth's unique ability to work directly with ministers and their public sector professionals. As a result, a focus on identifying and addressing policy gaps takes priority over direct delivery – where funding realities are less likely to have an impact. This ensures that member governments are provided with assistance that can help them strengthen their policy environments thus impacting their delivery systems for a more sustainable outcome.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has also worked towards ensuring that Commonwealth government voices – particularly those in Africa, Asia and small states – reach larger global consultations.

The importance of research as an option for delivering evidence to members to enhance policy action is founded on the decision to ensure that countries are well-informed of their programming contexts even when collaborating with other partners.

A focus on developing a strong evidence base on gender and economic empowerment, in areas such as gender and trade, offers value within the wider development paradigm. Increasingly, donors such as the UK's Department for International Development are calling for stronger evidence to support the implementation of a gender lens in their trade, finance, and private sector development programmes.

Strategic partnerships with governments and other organisations have added value to the human development portfolio in significant ways. Regional relationships have also helped to engage the Commonwealth more deeply in important areas of work. Local partnerships with civil society organisations are critical to ensuring that research outputs and new tools reach target beneficiaries.

A focus on identifying and addressing policy gaps takes priority over direct delivery – where funding realities are less likely to have an impact.

Youth

09

The Commonwealth has been at the forefront of global initiatives on youth for 40 years. Many Commonwealth countries are experiencing a youth dividend with young people healthier, better educated, and with higher expectations than ever before. This has been accompanied by an increase in youth unemployment and social marginalisation as a result of the global financial crisis.

These complexities have shaped the Commonwealth Secretariat's youth development work, which has been guided by the 2008 to 2012 strategic plan for youth affairs, and the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007 to 2015. The work has encompassed youth governance and youth networks, youth enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, youth work education and training, and sports for development and peace.

Between 2011 and 2013, the Commonwealth worked with over 35 Commonwealth countries and partnered with 17 organisations, including the Commonwealth of Learning, Commonwealth civil society associations, and major international and regional organisations. Programmes were delivered strategically through the Commonwealth Youth Programme and its regional centres in India, Guyana, Zambia and Solomon Islands, ensuring regional and national level focus.

Highlights 2011-2013

- The launch of the first global Youth Development Index for evaluating the progress of youth development in the Commonwealth; identifying good and innovative practice; and understanding critical areas for investment.
- The establishment of regional and pan-Commonwealth representative youth networks, such as the Commonwealth Youth Council, the Commonwealth Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs, and the Commonwealth Students' Association.
- Furthering of the professionalisation of youth work through the development of new Competency Standards, a Bachelors Degree at the University of the West Indies, the introduction of National Youth Work Associations, and establishment of Commonwealth Youth Work Week.
- Guidelines for governments and sports institutions to use sport for development across multiple policy areas.
- The launch of the YourCommonwealth.org website in 2011, where accredited young 'Commonwealth Correspondents' communicate about issues that are important to them and their societies.
- Renewal of the Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work, showcasing the extraordinary youth-led work in the Commonwealth.
- Development of a Guiding Framework on Youth Enterprise for use by member countries to create and support young entrepreneurs.
- Regional consultations on the financial inclusion of young people with key stakeholders including central banks.
- Delivery of the 8th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, in partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea.

International Perspectives in Youth Entrepreneurship Training

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre (CYP Africa) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the Government of Zambia's Ministry of Labour and Social Security and Ministry of Sports, Youth and Child Development developed and delivered an international programme on 'International Perspectives in Youth Entrepreneurship Training' (IPYET). IPYET is designed as an annual intensive trainer-of-trainers course, and shares experiences in youth entrepreneurship training from various countries and introduces participants to contemporary materials, techniques and approaches developed in the field.

> IPYET is designed as an annual intensive trainer-of-trainers course, and shares experiences in youth entrepreneurship training

There are many different manuals, tools, models, frameworks, and approaches for training young people in entrepreneurship. However, there are also many questions surrounding such training: How relevant do young people consider the training and materials? How effective and efficient are these trainings? What works, what doesn't? What lessons are realised? Are such workshops really youth centred or are they just entrepreneurship training? These and many more questions underpin the need for such an international workshop. Participants are expected to develop action plans for enhancing current youth entrepreneurship training programmes in their countries. CYP Africa, ILO, and partners also provide a six-month ongoing virtual support programme to participants for implementation of learning outcomes from this training programme.

Youth networks, participation and leadership

The Commonwealth Youth Programme has been actively engaged in peace, democracy and consensus building.

Young people from across the Commonwealth have participated as election observers in Commonwealth Observer Groups to report on the credibility of elections. The Commonwealth Secretariat also invested in a series of youth-led peace building interventions across all regions of the Commonwealth between 2011 and 2013. A youth-led peace building and mentorship programme in the Caribbean and a Commonwealth East Africa Youth Peace Building Camp took place in St Kitts and Nevis, and Rwanda, respectively.

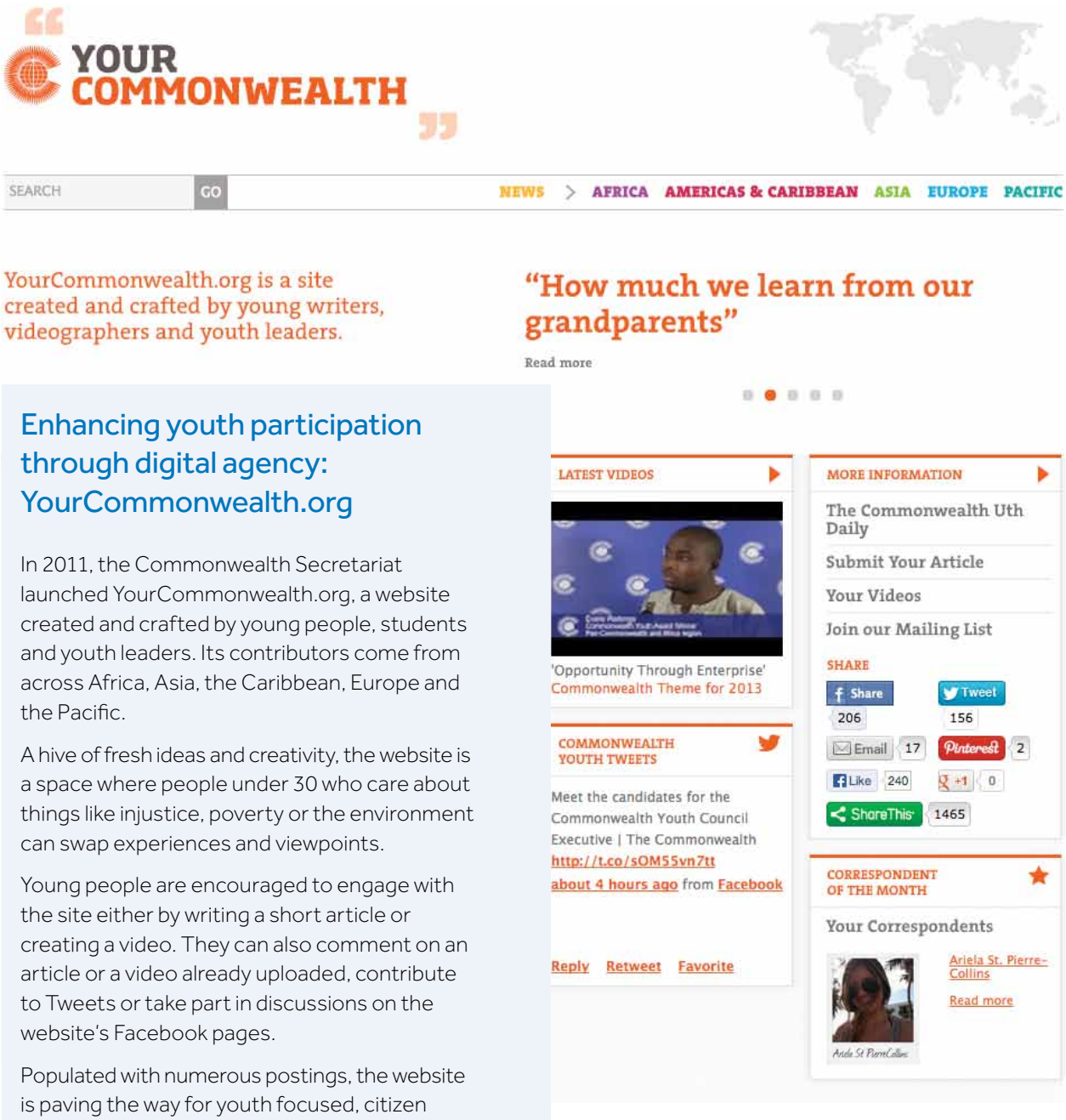
Youth advocacy and youth leadership networks were established and strengthened through a comprehensive programme for young people to gain increased access to decision making processes across the Commonwealth. In the Caribbean and the Pacific, the Commonwealth Secretariat supported the establishment of regional youth networks, while at the national level, support was given to creating National Youth Councils in Cameroon, Lesotho and Kenya, where parliaments have endorsed bills to establish these. National Youth Councils were strengthened in Solomon Islands, Cook Islands and Vanuatu.

Regional youth networks also participated in peace building initiatives, resulting in a Pacific Youth Statement on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, which was included in the Pacific Islands Leader Meeting Communiqué.

There has been significant work on the development of Pan-Commonwealth Youth Bodies, including creation of the new Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), a Commonwealth Students Association, and virtual thematic Youth Networks (in human rights, climate change and peace building). The CYP Centres have contributed significantly to capacity building of young leaders through training, the convening of key dialogue meetings and the facilitation of interface opportunities between youth leaders and government ministries. In CYP Africa, the online Discovering Young Leaders Programme was launched to empower young people and provide a platform for their views. In all regions, CYP convened young leaders to consult with them on the constitution of the CYC, which will be formally ratified during the first CYC General Assembly alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2013.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been instrumental in developing innovative tools that assist Youth Ministries to develop national youth policies and frameworks, and deliver programmes and services.

Youth Ministry capacity building has also been a key area of work for the Commonwealth Secretariat over the last two years. In particular, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been instrumental in developing innovative tools that assist Youth Ministries to develop national youth policies and frameworks, and deliver programmes and services. These have included the development and piloting of the Youth Ministry Assessment Tool (YMAT), the Policy Environment Assessment Score (PEAS), and the Youth Development Index (YDI).



Enhancing youth participation through digital agency: YourCommonwealth.org

In 2011, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched YourCommonwealth.org, a website created and crafted by young people, students and youth leaders. Its contributors come from across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific.

A hive of fresh ideas and creativity, the website is a space where people under 30 who care about things like injustice, poverty or the environment can swap experiences and viewpoints.

Young people are encouraged to engage with the site either by writing a short article or creating a video. They can also comment on an article or a video already uploaded, contribute to Tweets or take part in discussions on the website's Facebook pages.

Populated with numerous postings, the website is paving the way for youth focused, citizen journalism on key issues. Examples of issues under discussion include tackling education in northern Nigeria, human trafficking in the Americas and the Caribbean, and political violence in Bangladesh.

Commonwealth Youth Development Index – A global 'first'

In 2013, the Commonwealth launched the first index measuring the development and empowerment of young people in countries worldwide.

The Youth Development Index (YDI) offers an inter-country comparison of the environment for young people, aged 15 to 29, across five key areas: education, health, employment, civic participation and political participation.

The Index is the first comprehensive attempt to aggregate global data on young people and was formulated to help decision-makers identify and learn from areas of success, pinpoint priority areas for investment, and track progress over time. The methodology was developed by independent academic experts from across the Commonwealth, in conjunction with the Institute for Economics and Peace.

Youth enterprise and sustainable livelihoods

Unemployment affects young people more than any other social group. The Commonwealth Secretariat's main focus for increasing youth economic empowerment has been through promoting youth entrepreneurship and enterprise. Over the past two years, the Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered results through advocacy, capacity-building, technical support, partnerships, research, and assistance with policy development.

The Commonwealth Secretariat convened regional consultations on youth employment, financial inclusion and financial literacy across the Commonwealth during 2011–2013. This work is also a major aspect of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Economic Development programming, and collaborations with other Commonwealth Secretariat divisions in this area have led to young people trained in financial literacy at national and regional levels in the Caribbean and Africa, while as a result of the financial inclusion work, CYP Asia has led several national level consultations, and CYP Pacific has secured funding to undertake a study on youth financial literacy and is now working closely with a group of Pacific Reserve/Central Bank Governors to influence the insertion of youth into their work.

The Commonwealth Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAAYE) was established in 2012 with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Young Indians Group of the Confederation of Indian Industries. Since its launch, CAAYE has delivered notable activities, including advocacy on an enhanced youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in many forums, a regional summit on youth enterprise, and bilateral youth entrepreneurship development programmes. The 8th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in 2013 recommended replication of CAAYE in other regions of the Commonwealth as a good practice model on youth entrepreneurship.

At the Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre, a Commonwealth Secretariat initiated project, young men and women are trained in entrepreneurial and business skills, with additional support also provided for youth enterprises and life skills. Between 2010 and March 2012, Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre provided training for 5,434 youth. The centre has become a one-stop youth information point for the district, employing up to 40 skilled professionals in different skills and youth work, and is now supported by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID).

Pioneering the bankability of young people in India - increasing access to credit for youth entrepreneurs

In 2011, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Central Bank of India (CBI) and several local NGOs entered into a partnership to enhance the ability of young people in India to secure credit for business start-ups. The project is a pioneering attempt for banks to demonstrably champion the bankability of young people as reliable and trustworthy clients for credit.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has developed and is testing a model for young people's access to bank credit that may later be replicated in different regions of the Commonwealth. Aimed at supporting young people aged 20–29 for a period of two to three years, the project trains and guides entrepreneurs who have creativity, innovative ideas, skills and commitment to business development towards setting up micro and small business enterprises.

Loan amounts currently range from £1,200 to £12,000 and are granted to both individuals and group-run businesses. To date, £780,000 has already been disbursed to 370 young entrepreneurs.

Youth Work Education and Training

Youth Work Education and Training was one of CYP's earliest work streams, and remains a unique programme in intergovernmental and global circles. The Commonwealth Secretariat contributes to improving knowledge, skills and attitudes in youth development work across the Commonwealth. It does so by increasing the quality and quantity of technical qualifications, capacity building initiatives and resources available and delivered to youth development workers. Partnerships with institutions such as the University of the West Indies, the National University of Samoa and the Commonwealth of Learning have resulted in increases in the development of qualified youth work professionals. CYP has also supported the formation of National Youth Worker Associations in Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean. Underpinning these areas of work have been numerous capacity building initiatives across the Commonwealth for youth work professionals.

The Commonwealth Secretariat contributes to improving knowledge, skills and attitudes in youth development work across the Commonwealth

Increases in the number of qualified youth workers

The Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to increasing the number of qualified youth development workers in the Commonwealth, and ensuring they are recognised as professionals.

The Commonwealth Secretariat now has partnerships with nearly 30 academic institutions across the Commonwealth to deliver the Diploma. This resulted in the graduation of a large number of qualified youth workers. Between 2011 and 2013, 80 youth workers qualified in the Pacific region, 6,079 in Africa, and 385 in Asia.

In the Caribbean, the focus has been on moving beyond the Commonwealth's Diploma, resulting in the creation of a Bachelor of Youth Development Work in partnership with the University of the West Indies. The first cohort of over 100 students commenced in August 2012.

In March 2013, the CYP Africa convened a pan-Commonwealth conference on the education and training of youth workers, in partnership with the Presidency of the Government of South Africa, and the University of South Africa. Some 225 youth work academics and practitioners from 32 countries attended and forged a set of recommendations on the recognition of Youth Work as a profession. This initiative is expected to become a regular biennial Commonwealth event.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with the UK's National Youth Agency, piloted the first Commonwealth-wide advocacy campaign promoting youth work. Commonwealth Youth Work Week took place from 5 to 11 November 2012 and highlighted the role of front-line youth workers in supporting young people and communities across the Commonwealth.

Sport for Development and Peace

A relatively new mandate for the Commonwealth, work in this area was intensified in 2011 based on Commonwealth leaders' response to growing recognition of the role that sport-based interventions can play in development.

Between 2011 and 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat developed and published Commonwealth Guidelines for Advancing Development through Sport to assist member countries on policy and programming. Endorsed by the 6th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting in 2012, the publication provides a framework for using sport as a development tool across multiple policy areas (gender, social inclusion, education, health, peace-building, etc.) and is currently being used to support creation of national Sport for Development and Peace action plans in Sri Lanka,Barbados and Rwanda. Intensive capacity-building has also been delivered to officials of member governments,Commonwealth Secretariat staff and other Commonwealth organisations.

"This Guide, prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat, will enable member governments to take development through sport to the next step. It is both an intelligent digest of the research and "best practices" of the interventions of the last two decades, and wise, succinct advice to governments about how they can frame inclusive, workable policies and plan, conduct, and monitor and evaluate accessible, effective programmes. It will prove of enormous benefit to governments and decision-makers."

Global Physical Activity Network
(GlobalPANet)

Major meetings and forums

In April 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of Papua New Guinea, convened the first Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in five years, along with parallel forums for youth leaders and youth stakeholders. The theme was 'Young People at the Centre of Sustainable Development', and focused on the contribution that young people can and should be making to national and Commonwealth development.

As part of CHOGM in 2011, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with Commonwealth youth leaders, the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council and the Government of Australia, delivered the Commonwealth Youth Forum. The youth leaders then presented and discussed their recommendations with Heads of Government in a Youth Dialogue as part of the CHOGM agenda.

The Commonwealth Secretariat also delivered a Youth Forum at the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Mauritius in 2012, which culminated in the formation and endorsement of a Commonwealth Students' Association.

In April 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of Papua New Guinea, convened the first Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in five years

Delivery

Delivery of Youth programming in the Commonwealth Secretariat comes under the remit of the Youth Affairs Division, which incorporates the Commonwealth Youth Programme and its regional centres. Drawing on the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment, the Commonwealth Secretariat's work in this area also includes collaborations with other divisions. Examples of this include work with the Economic Affairs Division on financial literacy, the Special Advisory Services Division on youth livelihoods, the Social Transformation Programmes Division on youth engagement at the 2012 Commonwealth Education Ministers meeting, the Human Rights Unit on training of human rights activists with a youth lens, and the Political Affairs Division through youth engagement in election observations.

The Youth Affairs Division has established strategic collaborations with significant national, regional and global players such as the ILO, Youth Business International, and Child and Youth Finance International. These partnerships have facilitated regional consultations to discuss broader issues of youth employment and enterprise and hence helped build the capacity of Youth Ministries across the Commonwealth. Other partners include the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute for Youth Development and the British Council in India, for delivery of regional youth summits.

Engagement with institutions of higher learning has been integral to maximising the reach, ownership and sustainability of the Commonwealth Secretariat's youth work education modules. CYP Pacific has also played a key role in a multi-stakeholder initiative to develop a Pacific Youth Development Framework, in partnership with organisations such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and UN agencies.

All these partnerships and more have not only ensured that the Commonwealth Secretariat's own resources stretch further, but that the programmes themselves are higher quality and in a stronger position for replication and scaling-up where appropriate.

Raising the Commonwealth Profile

10

The Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to raising awareness of the Commonwealth and the impact of the Secretariat's work through the provision of communications advice and engagement with the media.

During the 2011 to 2013 reporting period, the Commonwealth Secretariat has delivered a comprehensive work programme aimed at enhancing its communications outreach and public affairs management of all aspects of the organisation's endeavours. This has included: a major corporate rebranding exercise; reaching global audiences through increased social media; delivering media and other communications support to the Commonwealth Secretariat's high profile events which included CHOGM 2011 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012; supporting the Commonwealth Secretariat's thematic divisions and publicising the impact of their work; professionalising Commonwealth publications; redesigning the Commonwealth website; and the release of previously classified records on the work of the organisation and member countries, into the public domain.

The Commonwealth Secretariat also recognises the importance of working directly with Commonwealth members on the development and enhancement of their media sectors. This is done through delivering technical assistance and capacity-building at the national and regional levels and is integral to the Commonwealth's values and principles, as outlined in the Charter under Freedom of Expression: 'We are committed to peaceful, open dialogue and the free flow of information, including through a free and responsible media, and to enhancing democratic traditions and strengthening democratic processes.'

Highlights 2011-2013

- Development of a new Commonwealth brand
- Redesign of the Commonwealth website
- Introduction of new digital asset management system underway

Supporting high profile Commonwealth events

Extensive media coverage of the annual Commonwealth Day celebrations in 2012 and 2013 also included the production of videos and the posting of articles around the respective Commonwealth themes. The 2012 Connecting Cultures Commonwealth theme site, created with the Commonwealth Foundation and Royal Commonwealth Society, attracted more than 16,000 visitors. Twenty thousand 2013 Commonwealth Day posters were printed and distributed to members' education ministries, schools in the UK, civil society organisations and members of the public.

Eleven Commonwealth ministerial meetings were supported throughout the reporting period on areas including Law, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, Sports, Education, Youth and Women's Affairs. CHOGM 2011 attracted over 1,000 journalists, with extensive coverage, while support was provided to the Commonwealth at international meetings, including the Rio+20 summit in 2012 and the G20 in Moscow in 2013.

The Commonwealth Secretariat was actively involved in publicising the strong focus on the Commonwealth during the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June 2012, including the production of three video news packages for posting on the Commonwealth Secretariat's website. Social media was used to ensure real-time communication with audiences, including the use of live Twitter feeds during the Jubilee Family Festival, the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant, Diamond Jubilee Beacons and a lunch hosted by the Secretary-General for the Queen and Commonwealth leaders. A co-ordinated social media plan with other Commonwealth organisations such as the Royal Commonwealth Society and Commonwealth Foundation was also implemented to maximise message outreach.

Reaching global audiences

The Commonwealth Secretariat has engaged in a major brand consolidation exercise over the last year, with the first phase now completed. The Commonwealth logo was originally designed in 1972 and since then a number of updates and variations have been developed. The rebranding has helped the Commonwealth Secretariat move closer towards ensuring that comprehensive guidelines and templates are now available to staff for the presentation of a consistent, strong brand identity for the Commonwealth's multiple and varied audiences. This has included consolidation of the Commonwealth's visual identity and the development of: new logo artwork; a series of sub-brands; and comprehensive visual identity guidelines. The second and final phase of the process will take place in the 2013-2014 financial year.

During 2011 - 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat increased its outreach to far greater audiences with its messages compared to previous years, due to concerted efforts to focus on sharpened outreach and impact. From July 2012 to June 2013, 85 news releases were distributed globally to publicise Commonwealth Secretariat activities. The Secretary-General, through his Spokesperson, issued five statements, which generated a large amount of public debate both within and outside of the Commonwealth, specifically on Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Commonwealth broadcasting has increased, with 117 videos filmed and produced during the period 2011-2013. This supplemented written news production and provided stand-alone video content for the Commonwealth Secretariat website and YouTube on a range of topics, including HIV vulnerability amongst youth and women, small states, sports for development, and debt management. More than 59,000 video views were recorded on our YouTube channel over the reporting period.

Electronic outreach has continued to grow via the organisation's website and through the use of digital innovations and influential platforms. The Commonwealth Secretariat website has had more than 1.6 million visitors between July 2011 and June 2013, with 71.1% new visitors. Substantial efforts have also been made to advance the Commonwealth Secretariat's social media reach with an increase in engagement across platforms such as Facebook and Flickr. Twitter engagement has leap-frogged with 9,525 followers by the end of June 2013, representing a 300% increase within this reporting period. On average, the Commonwealth Secretariat's Twitter account has 11 new followers a day.

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Supporting programmes and strengthening national media capacities

Integral to raising the Commonwealth's profile has been the work to enhance the media coverage of the Commonwealth Secretariat's results, delivered by its divisions. A significant example of this has been the media coverage generated by the Secretariat's engagement with the Rio+20 in 2012.

This also includes, aside from the periodic Commonwealth ministerial meetings and major global events, the Commonwealth Election Observer Groups. Within this reporting period, media support has been delivered to six Observer Groups during elections.

The Commonwealth Secretariat supported capacity-building of media at the national level through the Commonwealth Media Development Fund in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Enhancing publications, library and archive resources and digital platforms

During 2011-2013, 79 publications and reference books were published by the Commonwealth Secretariat. These covered topics spanning the organisation's programmatic work. This reporting period also saw a significant move by the Commonwealth Secretariat towards fully professionalising publications and protecting the organisation's institutional integrity by raising standards. A Publications Committee was constituted which now meets monthly and all publications are now typeset digitally to yield additional file formats for proposed e-publications.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's library and archive resources have also been strengthened in the last two years, with over 250 new print resources added and approximately 70 online and print journal subscriptions to support the work of Commonwealth Secretariat divisions. The records management strategy continues to form the basis of good record management keeping in the Commonwealth Secretariat through the use of the enhanced SharePoint storage and records management system, staff training, quality data capture and storage of records.

A total of 544 records, reflecting the work of the organisation and member countries, were released into the public domain during the reporting period.

Digital platforms have also been strengthened over the last two years. Since its launch at CHOGM in November 2011, Commonwealth Connects has grown steadily, bringing the total at the end of June 2013 to 125 networks. New networks included:

- Commonwealth Electoral Network
- Global Natural Fibres Forum
- Commonwealth Network on Environment and Climate Change
- Commonwealth-Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs
- Commonwealth Board of Governors
- Junior Election Professionals Initiative
- Technical Working Group on Resilience Building in Small States

2012 also saw the initiation of redesigning the Commonwealth Secretariat's official website. As of 30 June 2013 the project was within budget and on schedule for completion by end of August 2013.

"Founded in November 2011, CAAYE has been using the Commonwealth Connects platform very effectively since early 2012. The most crucial benefit has been the creation of a members-only virtual library and archive of all documentation that is generated periodically by the Alliance members and partners.

Being a virtual network spread across eight countries, the need to have a document archive which was up-to-date, easy to access and secure was felt strongly and the Connects platform provided this seamlessly."

Dr Rahul Mirchandani
Commonwealth Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs

"The Technical Working Group on Resilience Building in Small States has been working together since March 2013 using Commonwealth Connects to share information, exchange ideas and provide feedback on the Commonwealth's work on resilience building.

The use of Commonwealth Connects was well received by the group. It was strongly commended by members for being user friendly...The Group's membership has varying technology skills and yet all were able to navigate the site with little guidance."

Denny Lewis-Bynoe
Technical Working Group on Resilience Building in Small States

Strategic Planning, Human Resources, and Organisational Management

11

Strategic planning, human resources and organisational management provide oversight and support the leadership of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The last two years have been pivotal for the Commonwealth Secretariat, following the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) report 'A Commonwealth of the People: Time for Urgent Reform' and the development of a new Strategic Plan for 2013/14 – 2016/17.

The strategic planning process was an exercise in defining and positioning the Commonwealth Secretariat as a development interlocutor that can offer its member countries distinct advantages.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has also improved its internal governance to guarantee greater efficiency and effectiveness. This has included a move to results based management procedures and strengthened systems and management in core areas such as human resources.

Highlights 2011-2013

- The completion and approval of the Commonwealth Secretariat's new Strategic Plan 2013/14 – 2016/17;
- The creation of a new Human Resources Division, following the appointment of a Director in 2012;
- An organisation-wide training programme in Results Based Management; and
- A new environmental and procurement policy for the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Strategic planning, performance and evaluation

Preparations for a new Strategic Plan followed a CHOGM directive for the Secretary-General to prepare a Strategic Plan that was more focused and reflected the resources available to the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Strategic Planning process was also informed by the EPG recommendations. The Secretary-General appointed a task force of ministers to review the outstanding recommendations and to report to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

During the reporting period, evaluations were completed on the Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative, the Public Private Partnership programme, and the Criminal Law programme. Country studies for Sri Lanka, Belize and Solomon Islands were also delivered, and a study on the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) was concluded early in 2013. The findings and recommendations from these evaluations and reviews have fed into the drafting of the new Strategic Plan.

Results-based management

During 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat rolled-out an organisation-wide capacity-building programme on Results Based Management (RBM). The programme was developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat with a training consultant to provide RBM skills, knowledge and practice at all levels in the Commonwealth Secretariat. Participants also engaged with two member country organisations – the UK Government's Department for International Development and the Canadian International Development Agency – to share the practical challenges of incorporating RBM within their programmes and projects.

A steering committee was established in 2011 to strengthen monitoring and reporting through the Activity Results Tracking and Expenditure Management Information System (ARTEMIS). Linkages between ARTEMIS and CODA (the Commonwealth Secretariat's financial management system) have since been developed, while the IT ARTEMIS Support Team has grown to four.

Strategic partnerships and engagement with Commonwealth organisations

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Partnerships Committee endorsed a corporate approach to strategic partnerships for the organisation. Strategic relationships have focused on practical outcomes between the European External Action Service and the African Union. Discussions with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat have led to a proposal for the creation of a Pacific/EU/Commonwealth Governance Programme in the Pacific to be connected to the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility in the Secretariat.

The Commonwealth Secretariat also initiated a review mechanism for Commonwealth organisations to ensure that engagement with the divisions and member governments during high-level meetings, remain in concert with the core values of the Commonwealth. Efforts have been made to institutionalise wider Commonwealth involvement in planning and other Commonwealth Secretariat processes with plans to raise awareness among staff to explore the opportunities for joint work with Commonwealth organisations.

Human resource management

The new Director of Human Resources assumed office in September 2012, raising the Human Resources Section to a full Division. The Human Resources team has also been professionalised with the hiring of fully qualified advisers. Priorities over the first six months have included reviewing the Division's skills, competencies and potential structure, and how these can best fit with the strategic aims of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Work has also included supporting senior managers on the staffing implications of the new strategic plan, a review of CYP professional and local staffing, and dealing with formal grievances and disciplinary processes.

A revised Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS) package was implemented in 2012 following confirmation from the International Civil Service Commission that the proposals would improve competiveness and move the TACOS towards international norms. A survey of the pay and conditions of support staff undertaken for the Commonwealth Secretariat concluded that the levels of pay were consistent or ahead of comparable roles in the market.

The new competency framework continued to underpin performance management in the organisation. Competency-based individual work plans have helped to clarify annual performance objectives for staff. The Competency Framework also continued to link the strategic plan, annual divisional work plans and individual work plans. This enables effective performance monitoring within the RBM framework. The Commonwealth Secretariat has also revised the Corporate Induction Programme.

As of 30 June 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat had 380 employees. Of these, 87.11 per cent were permanent staff members on established contracts, with the remaining 12.89 per cent employed as temporary staff.

A total of 532 CFTC contracts were issued during the 2011 to 2013 reporting period, which includes 33 contracts for long-term experts, 450 new short-term consultancy contracts and 49 agreement letters.

Governance systems and management

The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to embed International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in its policies, procedures and systems by reporting through annual financial statements, management accounts and the 2012/2013 budget. The budget was prepared on an IPSAS basis for the first time and presented to the Board of Governors in May 2012.

The roll-out of the Commonwealth Secretariat financial system (CODA) to Commonwealth Youth Programme regional centres followed an IT upgrade.

New and revised policies across a number of areas were formulated on fraud, extra budgetary resources, procurement, cost share, risk and sponsorship.

A new environment policy for the Commonwealth Secretariat has been implemented, alongside a third external carbon footprint audit.

There are currently six tenants at the Geneva Small States Office: four small states (Maldives, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands) and two regional organisations (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States). The Government of The Bahamas has confirmed its upcoming tenancy. The Joint Office for Commonwealth Permanent Missions to the United Nations has 10 tenants and one vacancy since Nauru gave up its tenancy. Kiribati has since expressed interest. In the case of both offices, the Commonwealth Secretariat is examining ways to place the facilities on a more sustainable financial footing.

A new environment policy for the Commonwealth Secretariat has been implemented, alongside a third external carbon footprint audit.

Going Forward

The future role of the Commonwealth Secretariat and how it builds on its success while addressing ongoing challenges are pivotal if progress and sustainability are to be ensured.

12

Continuity and the new Strategic Plan

The Commonwealth and other multilateral organisations are working in a rapidly changing global environment with trends during this reporting period helping to inform new directions. Despite the global downturn, economic prospects for the Commonwealth as a group of countries are encouraging. This provides impetus for building on the success of key areas of work in economic development across the Commonwealth, while the Secretariat's focus on small and vulnerable states is in an even greater position to be leveraged with South-South co-operation models.

Core areas of work during 2011 to 2013 have shown to be in tune with future needs of member countries and global consensus on the issues. Climate change and environmental concerns remain a challenge, and the Secretariat's pioneering work on climate finance is timely. Similarly, the organisation's engagement with digital technologies – from Transparency Sierra Leone to the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative – has resulted in a solid foundation for enhancing digital capacity for citizens and institutions in the coming years.

The new Strategic Plan reflects the shared priorities of members while delivering realistic outcomes that add value. The Secretariat will continue to balance its priorities between 'democracy' and 'development', which are not mutually exclusive, working in novel ways to deliver results where the organisation is best placed to intervene.

Doing things better

The new Strategic Plan is designed to ensure that the Secretariat delivers activities that have more impact. Efforts are being made to institutionalise a Results Based Management (RBM) culture.

Key recommendations from evaluations of the Secretariat's work must be taken on board. These include how a lack of adherence to RBM has limited programme effectiveness, efficiency sustainability and impact. Similarly, some of the Secretariat's delivery mechanisms need to be critically reviewed for their efficiency and impact, from ad hoc workshops to the use of grant funding.

Aligned with this is the need for shared responsibilities between the Secretariat and member governments on outcomes and accountability. This includes instituting a comprehensive system of monitoring the outcomes of interventions over sustained periods of time.

The Secretariat has unique approaches and delivery options that are based on the comparative advantage of its membership. A value-for-money approach needs to be formally adopted and institutionalised, tailored to the capacities and realities of the Secretariat's role in the wider global development landscape.

The Commonwealth's future in a global context

The Secretariat's engagement with the post-2015 framework consultations has contributed much-needed perspectives from the global South and small and vulnerable countries. This engagement has come at a time when shifting paradigms of development assistance are also being debated. The post-aid world, development effectiveness and new development players are themes that will continue to influence the post-2015 landscape.

The post-aid world, development effectiveness and new development players are themes that will continue to influence the post-2015 landscape.

The Commonwealth's position within this new paradigm offers an opportunity for the work of the Secretariat to be a catalyst for progress. With its comparative advantage and ability to add unique value, the Commonwealth Secretariat must be ready to fully harness all possibilities on behalf of its membership.

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