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## Introduction

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### Gender and the Public Service

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Despite major efforts and some progress over the last couple of decades, women continue to be disadvantaged in comparison with men in many aspects of life, in most countries. The UNDP's Human Development Report records progress in human development according to indicators of health, education and income. Since 1995 the Human Development Index has included two gender-related indexes: the Gender-Related Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The GEM is of particular significance to the public service because it focuses on women's and men's political participation (seats held in parliament), the percentages of administrators and managers, and professional and technical workers who are women, and the share of earned income going to women and men. Thus, although the figures used in the GEM relate not just to the public sector but to all sectors, they provide a snapshot of the gender breakdown of decision-making in various countries, which informs an understanding of how women fare relative to men within the public service itself.

Table 1 shows the GEM for selected Commonwealth countries. It reveals that while in some countries women are well represented among professional and technical staff, there are fewer women than men working as parliamentarians, administrators and managers in all Commonwealth countries for which figures are available. And in terms of earned income share, the picture in most areas is of significant bias in favour of men.

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### Gender Mainstreaming

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The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development presents a vision of:

**Table 1 Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), Selected Commonwealth Countries**

Country	GEM Rank	Seats Held in Parliament (% to Women)	Administrators and Managers (% Women)	Professional and Technical Workers (% Women)	Earned Income Share (% to Women)
Australia	11	20.5	43.3	25.0	39.8
The Bahamas	19	10.8	26.3	56.9	39.5
Bangladesh	76	9.1	5.1	23.1	23.1
Barbados	14	18.4	37.0	52.1	39.5
Belize	32	10.8	36.6	38.8	18.0*
Botswana	39	8.5	36.1	61.4	38.9
Cameroon	65	12.2	10.1	24.4	30.9
Canada	6	19.3	42.2	56.1	37.8
Cyprus	60	5.4	10.2	40.8	27.1
Fiji Islands	68	5.8	9.6	44.7	21.4
Guyana	33	20.0	12.8	47.5	26.4
India	86	7.3	2.3	20.5	25.7
Lesotho	41	11.2	33.4	56.6	30.3
Maldives	67	6.3	14.0	34.6	35.4
Malta	-	-	-	-	20.9
Malawi	80	5.6	4.8	34.7	42.0
Malaysia	48	10.3	11.9	44.5	30.2
Mauritius	49	7.6	14.3	41.4	25.4
Mozambique	43	25.2	11.3	20.4	41.3
New Zealand	5	29.2	32.3	47.8	38.8
Pakistan	92	3.4	3.4	20.1	20.8
Papua New Guinea	85	-	11.6	29.5	34.8
Sierra Leone	77	6.3	8.0	32.0	29.7
Singapore	47	2.5	34.3	16.1	30.7
Solomon Islands	91	2.1	2.6	27.4	40.0*
South Africa	22	23.7	17.4	46.7	30.8
Sri Lanka	70	5.3	16.9	24.5	34.5
Swaziland	61	8.4	14.5	54.3	34.9
Trinidad & Tobago	17	19.4	23.3	53.3	29.7
United Kingdom	20	7.8	33.0	43.7	35.0
Zambia	71	9.7	6.1	31.9	38.8
Zimbabwe	45	14.7	15.4	40.0	37.4

*“a world in which women and men have equal rights and opportunities at all stages of their lives to express their creativity in all fields of human endeavour, and in which women are respected and valued as equal and able partners in establishing values of social justice, equity, democracy and respect for human rights. Within such a framework of values, women and men will work in collaboration and partnership to ensure people-centred sustainable development for all nations.”*

Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995

Gender mainstreaming is the central strategy of the Plan of Action for advancing gender equality and equity. It refers to the consistent use of a gender perspective at all stages of the development and implementation of policies, plans, programmes and projects. In terms of the public service, this would include the activities of the public service commission, the central personnel office of government, as well as personnel departments in core and sectoral ministries.

## **Scope and Objectives of this Guide**

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The purpose of this publication is to provide guidelines for mainstreaming gender in the public service of national governments.

The guide presents the main elements of the Gender Management System, which has been developed by the Commonwealth as an effective means of mainstreaming gender in national governments and in the broader civil society. It provides an overview of global and Commonwealth mandates for promoting gender equality and equity, and examines the development of theoretical approaches to the issue.

The guide examines the structures and functions of public service personnel management in the context of public service reform, and examines gender-related policy issues in personnel management. And it provides guidelines on gender analysis and proposes a number of policy interventions which governments may consider adopting, depending on particular national circumstances, to advance gender equality and equity in the public service. It is intended primarily for use by Commonwealth governments that are implementing gender mainstreaming in all their policies, plans and programmes. It may also be of use to other governments, related agencies and non-governmental organisations.

\* to nearest whole number  
- figures not available  
Source: United Nations Development Programme, 1997