

Introduction

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This book is one of the products of a Commonwealth Secretariat project which was launched in 1989. It is a companion to a slimmer volume which was published simultaneously and is entitled *Making Small Practical: The Organisation and Management of Ministries of Education in Small States*. The companion book is structured by topic rather than by country, and it has a slightly different target audience. However, both books draw on a common body of source material.

The project's original intention was only to produce the companion work. It was subsequently decided that the studies presented here were of considerable interest, and that it would therefore be valuable to prepare this second volume. The book contains a unique body of material, which on the one hand provided much input for the companion work and on the other hand permits considerable amplification of the slimmer volume.

When preparing this book, the editor and the Commonwealth Secretariat had two main readerships in mind. The first overlaps with that intended for the companion book, namely senior managers and trainers serving educational systems in small states. It was felt that these two groups would welcome the more detailed presentation in this volume as supplementary material for their work. From the country studies readers can gain a deeper understanding of the specific organisational and managerial frameworks of a range of small states.

A second audience is the academic community concerned with education and with public administration in small states. During the 1980s a considerable literature began to emerge in both fields. The literature on education analysed the ways in which provision of education in small states differed from that in larger states, stressing both the special advantages gained by small states and the special constraints that they face. It focused on all levels and types of education, noting the diversity of small states but also identifying commonalities in the ways that small states approach the issues that confront them.

The literature on public administration had a similar focus. It was

mainly concerned with the extent to which small states had inherited models of administration which were originally designed for larger states and which were of questionable appropriateness in small states. Especially during the 1980s, specialists in public administration began to search for alternative models to meet small-state needs more effectively. Although the present book focuses only on ministries of education, it has considerable relevance to the broader field of public administration.

This Introduction has six main sections, beginning with information on definitions and the contents of the book. This is followed by an account of other Commonwealth Secretariat initiatives on education in small states. The third section moves to the literature on education in small states, highlighting its growth and principal thrusts, and indicating the ways in which this book contributes to the literature. The fourth section presents a parallel account of the literature on public administration in small states. Fifthly, a comment is made on the applicability and limitations of the work; and the final section outlines points on the structure of the book.

1. Definitions and Contents

Among the first problem confronting the architects of the Commonwealth project was definition of 'small', which is of course a relative term applicable to many criteria. After some discussion, the project designers opted to follow much of the literature and take population as the main criterion. Small states were then defined as ones with populations below 1.5 million. However, it was recognised that other criteria are also important, including geographic area and size of the economy. It was also recognised that the cut-off point of 1.5 million is entirely arbitrary, and that in many circumstances it is appropriate to examine issues along a continuum of scale.

A second question concerned definition of the word 'state'. The architects of the project wished to avoid the type of debate undertaken by political scientists (see e.g. Dommen 1985), but wished nevertheless to include some non-sovereign as well as sovereign states. It was argued that the issues confronting non-sovereign states which have strong autonomy are in many ways similar to those confronting sovereign states.

Within these parameters, case studies were sought from states displaying a wide range of economic, geographic and cultural diversity. Almost all the people invited to produce case studies accepted, and the result has been a broad collection. The case studies focus on some

countries which are rich, and others that are poor; some are island states while others are coastal or inland states; some are single-island while others are multi-island states; one has a population below 15,000, while another has a population over a million; and geographically, the studies are from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the South Pacific. Yet within the diversity readers will be able to discern important common threads.

Another important feature is that the studies were all written or co-authored by nationals of the small states concerned. In most cases, indeed, the authors were administrators in ministries of education, dealing on a day-to-day basis with the issues that they address. They have therefore been able to speak with authenticity and authority. Some chapters were co-authored by academics or others outside the ministries concerned. This strategy was deliberately promoted by the Commonwealth Secretariat in order to strengthen the objectivity of description and analysis.

These are the reasons why the material was earlier described as unique. Never before has such material been produced in this form; and the comparative element permitted by collection of these studies in one place means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

2. Commonwealth Secretariat Projects in Small States

The Commonwealth has a natural concern for small states. Among its 50 sovereign members, 28 have populations below 1.5 million. The Commonwealth also embraces many small associated states and dependencies (Table 0.1).

Commonwealth concern about the particular problems faced by small states was first given formal expression at the 1977 meeting of Finance Ministers in Barbados (Georges 1985, p.1). Having noted the special characteristics of small island economies, the Ministers urged the international community to adopt a more flexible approach to the requirements of these states. Subsequently the Commonwealth Secretariat prepared a programme to assist in overcoming "the disadvantages of small size, isolation and scarce resources which severely limit the capacity of such countries to achieve their development objectives or to pursue their national interests in a wider context". This was endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their 1979 meeting in Lusaka, and was reaffirmed at their 1981 meeting in Melbourne.

Since that time, programmes for small states have been developed on specific issues. One important report focused on political and eco-

Table 0.1: Commonwealth Independent States, Associated States and Dependencies with Populations below 1.5 Million

Country/Region	Population (1988)	Country/Region	Population (1988)
<u>Africa</u>		<u>Caribbean (Contd.)</u>	
Botswana	1,164,000	British Virgin Islands	13,000
The Gambia	822,000	Cayman Islands	20,000
Mauritius	1,048,000	Montserrat	12,000
Namibia	1,262,000	Turks & Caicos Islands	10,000
Seychelles	67,000		
Swaziland	737,000	<u>Europe</u>	
<u>Asia</u>		Cyprus	686,000
Brunei Darussalam	241,000	Malta	345,000
Maldives	200,000		
<u>Caribbean</u>		Guernsey	55,000
Antigua & Barbuda	84,000	Jersey	82,000
Bahamas	247,000	Gibraltar	29,000
Barbados	255,000	Isle of Man	64,000
Belize	182,000	<u>South Pacific</u>	
Dominica	81,000	Kiribati	67,000
Grenada	102,000	Nauru	8,000
Guyana	756,000	Solomon Islands	304,000
St. Kitts & Nevis	43,000	Tonga	101,000
St. Lucia	143,000	Tuvalu	8,000
St. Vincent & Grenadines	122,000	Vanuatu	151,000
Trinidad & Tobago	1,241,000	Western Samoa	168,000
Anguilla	7,000	Cook Islands	20,000
Bermuda	56,000	Niue	3,000
		Tokelau	2,000

nomic vulnerability (Georges 1985). The specific needs of small states have also been addressed by the Management Development Programme (e.g. Commonwealth Secretariat 1989a).

The small-state activities of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Education Programme began in 1983. In that year the organisation commissioned Colin Brock of the University of Hull (UK) to undertake a survey of education in the small member states of the Commonwealth. Brock had previously worked in the Caribbean, and his existing publications included two seminal articles on small countries (Brock 1980, 1983). The findings of the commissioned survey were published in a report entitled *Scale, Isolation and Dependence: Educational Development in Island Developing and Other Specially Disadvantaged States* (Brock 1984).

The next step for the Commonwealth Secretariat was organisation

of a pan-Commonwealth meeting on small states, held in Mauritius in 1985. The meeting brought together participants from small states in the Caribbean, Europe, the South Pacific, Africa and the Indian Ocean, and was the first event of its kind. Despite the wide diversity of cultures and economies in the countries represented, the meeting demonstrated that small size was a determinant of common features in the education systems (Commonwealth Secretariat 1986). One output of the project was a book edited by Kazim Bacchus and Colin Brock (1987), entitled *The Challenge of Scale*.

Since the 1985 conference, the Commonwealth Secretariat has proceeded with more specialised projects. A 1987 meeting in Fiji focused on the supply, training and professional support of educational personnel in multi-island situations (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987), and a 1988 meeting in St. Lucia focused on post-secondary colleges in small states (Commonwealth Secretariat 1988). The Secretariat also commissioned work on training of multi-functional administrators (Farrugia & Attard 1989). The project on the organisation and management of ministries of education in small states was launched in Malta in 1989 (Commonwealth Secretariat 1989b).

In parallel with these activities, the Commonwealth Secretariat has built up training and consultancy expertise on small-state issues. In the specific field of education, the Secretariat is keen to promote exchange of personnel and experiences between officers from the ministries of education of small states. Efforts are also being made to develop expertise within the Universities of Malta, the South Pacific, and the West Indies, and the Secretariat has arranged collaboration with Unesco and several other organisations.

3. The Literature on Education in Small States

(a) Development of the Literature

Study of the education systems of small states lagged behind study of economics and politics. One doctoral thesis on the topic was presented in 1972 by Harrigan. The author is a citizen of the US Virgin Islands, and the bulk of his thesis focused on that territory. However, Harrigan also made some general points. One was the suggestion (pp.2-3) that small states:

have the potential to evolve a distinctive identity by recognition of their limitations, a reordering of their priorities and a restructuring and redesigning of their institutions.

Harrigan thus charted an important conceptual path for future studies.

Perhaps surprisingly, Harrigan's work was not followed up with further studies until the 1980s. As noted above, much of the seminal work was undertaken by Brock and by the Commonwealth Secretariat, working both separately and together.

During the same period, awareness of the specific needs of small states increased within Unesco. The Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID), which contained a large number of small states, was established in 1981 (Berstecher 1988). Three years later Unesco opened an office in Western Samoa to serve the states of the South Pacific, the majority of which were small (Higginson 1987, p.140). In 1986 Unesco headquarters commissioned a manuscript on educational planning in small countries (Bray 1987), which was republished in revised form in 1991. Also, in 1990 small states were the focus of a round table sponsored jointly by Unesco and the Commonwealth Secretariat at an international congress in Mexico on the planning and management of educational development (Unesco 1990, pp.27-9).

In parallel, an increasing amount of work was being conducted by scholars in various universities. Bennell & Oxenham (1983), for example, prepared a paper on skills and qualifications for small states; in addition to the work already mentioned, Brock and colleagues prepared several papers on a wide range of aspects (e.g. Brock & Parker 1985; Brock & Smawfield 1988; Brock 1988a, 1988b); the British Comparative & International Education Society organised a mini conference on the topic at the end of 1984 (Brock 1985); Bray and colleagues prepared papers on Montserrat, Macau and Brunei Darussalam (Bray & Fergus 1986; Bray & Hui 1989; Attwood & Bray 1989); Atchoarena (1985, 1988a, 1988b) prepared a doctoral dissertation and various papers on the Caribbean; and Smawfield (1988) and Smith (1988) wrote doctoral theses viewing the British Virgin Islands and the Falkland Islands in the context of the small-states literature.

Education in small states was also a focus in several conferences. Special panels were organised at the 1990 and 1991 conferences of the Comparative & International Education Society in the USA, and a full conference on education in small systems was organised by the University of London Institute of Education in 1990.

(b) The Contributions of this Book

The above account shows that in recent years the field has gathered considerable momentum, to which the studies presented here add a

significant element. Although they are presented from the perspective of a specialised sub-field, they also have broader implications. They confirm some points in the existing literature, but add details and depth. While it is impossible here to draw out all aspects, it is at least useful to highlight a few.

One area of contribution is to comprehension of the processes of educational planning in small states. This was a specific focus of work by Atchoarena (1989, 1990), Bray (1987, 1990b, 1991) and Packer (1990), and has also been touched on by other authors. The studies presented here stress the constraints imposed by small size on operating full, specialised planning units. The ministries in Kiribati, Dominica and Jersey do not have specialised planning units at all, instead requiring planning to be carried out as a collective function by a team of senior staff. The other states do have planning units, but they are in all cases small and restricted in scope.

Likewise, it is difficult for the ministries to undertake the related tasks of research and evaluation. As noted in the chapter on Dominica, although policy-makers can learn from research in other countries, foreign studies are often a poor substitute for local ones. The Botswana, Brunei Darussalam and Guyana chapters highlight the value of a local university, and the ministry in Barbados benefits from the local campus of the University of the West Indies. However, the other countries examined in this book have neither universities nor regional campuses.

A related point may be made about curriculum development. The chapters presented here indicate that some formal machinery exists for curriculum development in every state except Jersey; but in several cases that machinery is very limited. In Montserrat, for example, the curriculum development unit consists of just one person; and in Kiribati the unit has only four people. Other ministries have larger units, but then encounter major problems of cost, recruitment, and balance of personnel within the organisation as a whole. It is particularly worth noting the situation in The Gambia, where the ministry did have a large curriculum unit but was advised to cut it down and to deploy curriculum developers as general managers rather than specialists.

Allied to this point is another about textbooks. Several authors in the broader literature have pointed out that small states lack both the personnel to produce books and the economies of scale necessary to justify large-scale production (e.g. Conroy 1982, p.59; Bray & Hui 1989, p.139; Fergus 1991, p.10). This feature was also noted in several of the case studies. For example, the chapters on Dominica, Guyana and Montserrat indicated that, particularly at the secondary level, their education systems are dependent on books developed for the Caribbean as a whole or for other parts of the world. However, the Solomon

Islands chapter shows that much can still be done when ministry personnel set their minds to it. During the 1980s major strides were made in development of materials for Solomon Islands schools.

Another feature concerns the international aspects of educational provision. For example, many chapters highlight the role in education of both regional and broader international bodies. They point out that these bodies provide access to skills and services which would otherwise be lacking, but that they also impose constraints on flexibility and can make serious manpower demands. In these observations the country studies substantiate many remarks in the existing literature (e.g. Taufe'ulungaki 1987; Higginson 1987; Brock 1988b; Jones 1989).

The chapters also highlight the role of international aid for small states. Many authors in the existing literature (e.g. UNCTAD Secretariat 1985; Connell 1986; Goodridge & Peters 1987) have pointed out that in general small states receive higher per capita allocations of foreign aid than do larger states. Several chapters discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this situation, noting that aid can be of great assistance, but also that it can create serious distortions.

A further aspect concerns arrangement for examinations. Brock & Smawfield (1988, p.229) highlight the pressures on small states to secure accreditation which is recognised in the wider world. The countries covered in this book indicate diversity in the ways that they may do this. Barbados, Dominica, Guyana and Montserrat are members of the Caribbean Examinations Council; Jersey is largely tied to UK examinations; Solomon Islands is a member of the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment; The Gambia is a member of the West African Examinations Council; and both Seychelles and Brunei Darussalam use the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. This is an instructive array of strategies for dealing with a common problem.

Finally, it is worth quoting Brock (1988b, p.312), who concluded one of his papers with the observation that:

Whatever the eventual answers to the problems of educational provision in small states might be, they will the more likely be found if there is much more research both into particular and general issues in this field. This means more in-depth case-studies of individual systems as well as more comparative analysis across the numerous range of small states.

It is in such a spirit that this book has been produced. It is perhaps especially valuable because it has developed from the small states themselves rather than from large states.

4. The Literature on Public Administration in Small States

(a) Development of the Literature

The literature on public administration in small states first began to develop earlier than that on education, in the mid-1960s. This was the period in which significant numbers of small states began to achieve sovereignty, and questions were raised about the role and voting powers of such states in the United Nations. Various branches of the United Nations undertook specialist studies of small states, one of which included specific focus on public administration (Rapoport et al. 1971).

However, this particular episode of interest in small states within the United Nations was not longlasting. No action was taken to modify voting rights, and concern about the special development issues confronting small states gradually subsided. A few important publications on the administration of small states did appear in the academic world during the 1970s (e.g. Jacobs 1975; Jones 1976; Murray 1977), but it was not until the 1980s that the literature began to develop in a substantial way.

Much of the seminal work of the 1980s appeared in the journal *Public Administration and Development*. It began with a general article by Murray (1981), which formed the basis for a series of more specific case studies. Hope (1983) and Kersell (1987, 1988, 1989, 1990) wrote about the Commonwealth Caribbean, and others focused on Niue (Thynne 1981), St. Helena (Gillett 1983), Tuvalu (Tisdell & Fairbairn 1983) and Fiji (Baker 1990).

Other works which deserve specific mention are Allan (1980) which focused on both the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Barrett (1986) which concentrated on the Caribbean, and Ghai (1990) which was principally concerned with the South Pacific. Also, a 1985 paper by Murray extended his 1981 work with particular reference to the South Pacific.

(b) The Contributions of this Book

Perhaps the strongest point to emerge from this book is that despite the increased awareness of the need to adapt conventional models of public administration to small states, many bureaucracies still have a long way to go. Several case studies portray administrative structures which are clumsy and inefficient, and which are unduly constrained by inherited traditions and models. Of course traditions cannot and should not be jettisoned overnight. But there is clearly a need for more flexibility and imagination in at least some of the bureaucracies des-

cribed here. On the other hand, and more positively, there is also some evidence of adaptation from which others can learn. In this respect, the book extends the work of Murray (1981, 1985) and others. It is instructive, for example, to see the ways that some ministries group functions at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, most multi-faceted ministries group education with such closely-related functions as culture, sports, youth and community affairs; but some ministries group education with such less closely-related functions as health, postal services and ecclesiastical affairs. When carefully managed, multi-functional grouping permits more efficient use of personnel, and promotes linkages between sectors.

The same principle applies at the micro level. Almost all chapters discuss ways in which tasks are grouped to cover priority needs and make best use of available expertise. Many chapters also highlight ways that small ministries make use of personnel who are not actually in the ministries themselves. Such personnel include school principals and teachers, who help for example in curriculum development and teacher appraisal. These perspectives support an observation by the Commonwealth Secretariat (quoted in Brock 1988b, p.306) that:

Governments in small countries may need to encourage a concept of professional which differs from that prevailing in large countries. In the latter, professional 'standards' involve depth rather than breadth. But small states do not need specialized individuals who have a great deal of knowledge which is inapplicable to conditions at home and who think in terms of international salary levels. They certainly need the best; but in small countries the 'best' may sometimes be defined in terms of flexibility and breadth rather than depth.

The case studies also support the observations by Murray (1981, 1985), Richards (1982) and Sutton (1987) that political and bureaucratic roles are likely to be intertwined much more closely in small states than in large ones. The Jersey case study makes this point strongly, suggesting that "small state politicians know -- and want to know -- a great deal about the activities of the bureaucracy", and noting that in larger systems bureaucrats are able to build stronger 'protective' procedures which create some distance between them and politicians. The Brunei Darussalam and Maldives case studies also cite instances of individuals who were both bureaucrats and politicians. In Brunei Darussalam the Minister is also Vice Chancellor of the University, and in Maldives the Director of Educational Services is also a Member of Parliament.

Another area in which the case studies seem to recommend a departure from conventional doctrines on public administration concerns job definition and recruitment. As pointed out by Murray (1985, p.193), conventional doctrine asserts that administrators should begin by defining needs, should then proceed to define jobs, and only in the third step should seek individuals to fill those jobs. Any other procedure, it is argued, risks inefficient and unbalanced administration in which individuals are given jobs simply because they are available and have the necessary influence.

However, the case studies here stress the difficulties arising from the need to recruit from a small pool of expertise. Several chapters argue for a more flexible recruitment procedure in which authorities identify talented potential recruits and then ask how such people could be used to contribute to the goals of the organisation. Viewed from the perspective of small states, defining jobs around the talents of specific individuals seems much less inappropriate than it might seem when viewed from the perspective of larger states.

Such procedures also have implications for the organisation chart as a whole. In many small states, organisation charts are constantly changed to accommodate new individuals. Viewed from the perspective of conventional public administration doctrine, this seems a weakness. But if the charts are being adjusted to fit the changing patterns of human resource availability, then it would be inappropriate not to change them. Once again, the idea of a fixed chart with lots of boxes into which individuals are made to fit is a concept which may be more appropriate in a large state than a small one. Flexibility and even frequent change of organisation charts may in some circumstances be a strength rather than a weakness.

The book has also placed considerable stress on the managerial strategies needed in small states. Almost all chapters stress the need for managers to take account of the highly personalised nature of small states in which individuals have multiple connections outside the workplace as well as within it, and in which everyone seems to know everyone else. These aspects have been addressed in the existing literature (e.g. Richards 1982; Sutton 1987; Farrugia & Attard 1989), but the examples presented in this book extend and elaborate on previous perceptions. One aspect concerns the different strategies for staff appraisal needed in small states, and another concerns the strategies for dealing with constrained promotion hierarchies.

A further point concerns levels of informality and formality. People in large states might assume that the interpersonal networks of small states permit greater informality in decision-making and other management. However, several case studies point out that in order to

protect themselves from rumours and unfair accusations administrators in small states often have to pay *more* attention to rules and regulations, and have to be seen to 'go by the book'. This may be linked with what Lowenthal (1987, p.38) called the need for 'managed intimacy' in small states.

As they go through the rest of the book, readers will doubtless identify further ways in which the book extends and elaborates on the existing literature. Space constraints prevent exhaustive identification here of all points of contact significance. Instead, this section will close with a quotation which parallels the one that ended the section on education in small states. This quotation is from the literature review prepared by Schahczenski (1990, p.79):

Small developing states may share unique social, political and administrative characteristics that are as potentially conducive for development as would be the adoption of externally developed modes of 'modernisation'. Unfortunately the current research on the administrative problems of the small developing state has not provided the kind of comparative research that would be useful for discovering these shared developmental possibilities.

It is hoped that the studies presented in this book will meet at least part of what Schahczenski had in mind.

5. Applicability and Limitations

Small states are of course a very diverse group. Although for this project population was taken as the principal criterion of scale, it was noted above that other criteria are also important. Moreover, a state which is small on one criterion is not necessarily small on the others. Although all the states covered in this book have populations below 1.5 million, their territorial areas range from 103 square kilometres in Montserrat to 581,630 square kilometres in Botswana. Likewise, the size of GNP (1988) ranges from US\$43.5 million in Kiribati to US\$4,097 million in Brunei Darussalam.

Readers should also bear in mind other aspects of diversity. The culture and history of Malta is very different from that of The Gambia; the geographical isolation of Seychelles is very different from the clustering of states in the Caribbean; and the multi-island archipelago in Solomon Islands presents major administrative challenges not found in such compact states as Barbados and Jersey. All this diversity must of course be borne in mind when attempting to make general observa-

tions.

A further matter of which readers should beware when making comparisons is that specific terms may have different meanings in different countries. One example is the Chief Education Officer (CEO). According to the Caribbean tradition, individual ministries have only one CEO whose post has evolved from what used to be the Director of Education, and who is generally considered the chief professional in the ministry (Goodridge 1985). It appears from the Kiribati chapter that a similar interpretation is valid there. However, the ministry in Botswana has four CEOs and one Chief Technical Education Officer. It seems that in Botswana the term CEO is used for posts which would elsewhere be designated Senior Education Officer (SEO).

Similar comments apply to the post of Under Secretary. In Botswana the title is reserved for the head of the administrative branch, and the Under Secretary in the Ministry of Education has counterparts with similar titles in other ministries in the government. In Solomon Islands, by contrast, the title is used in the ministry of education for the two people below the rank of Permanent Secretary. One of these people is responsible for the administration wing, but the other is responsible for the education wing.

Nevertheless, commonalities are also clearly evident, both in terminology and in the basic shape of bureaucracies. Many of these features arise from the common colonial heritage, and the lessons to be drawn from the case studies are also generally applicable to the other Commonwealth small states.

Moreover, since almost all states use bureaucratic forms which are heavily influenced by Western models and traditions, to some extent the lessons to be drawn from the case studies also have strong applicability in non-Commonwealth small states. Of course there are significant differences between, for example, British and French bureaucratic legacies. For instance the French colonial style is generally characterised as more centralised, with stronger emphasis on standardisation between territories (Harris 1990, p.55). However, it seems likely that comparison of the types of problems faced by educational administrators in ex-British and ex-French colonies would reveal more similarities than differences.

A related point concerns ministry functions. Although this book is solely concerned with ministries of education, it seems probable that many of its lessons are applicable to other ministries. Taylor's (1990) article on the administration of health in the small states of the South Pacific shows considerable overlap with the types of concern raised here; and many points of contact may be identified with the broadly-focused work of Murray (1981, 1985). In all small ministries the basic

basic questions include ways to group functions to make best use of scarce talents, ways to train officers for multi-functional roles, strategies for effective management in a highly personalised society, etc..

However, it must also be recognised that in most countries Education is among the largest ministries. Because of this, the impact of small scale documented and analysed here is not as extreme as in other ministries. It would be highly desirable to conduct a similar survey of the smaller ministries in the countries presented here. Perhaps the pair of books prepared under the Commonwealth project can act as a model and inspiration both for an investigation of this kind and for a comparative survey in non-Commonwealth states.

6. Structure of the Book

The 14 country studies in the book could have been presented in many different orders. For instance they could have been presented most simply in alphabetical order. Alternatively, they could have been presented in ascending order of population size, of area or of GNP. Or thirdly, they could have been grouped by their geographical location in the world.

After some consideration, the last of these was chosen. It has the merit of permitting some countries with common cultures and historical circumstances to be presented as a group. This is most obvious in the Caribbean, though also applies in some degree to the other groupings. However, for the sake of neutrality the alphabet was still used, first for the listing of geographic regions and then for the presentation of countries within each region.

Yet even this set of groupings fails to capture some points of commonality. For instance Seychelles is situated in the Indian Ocean, and in geography perhaps has more in common with Maldives than with Botswana and The Gambia. Also, the circumstances faced by Montserrat and Seychelles, which are among the smallest of the small, are qualitatively rather different from Guyana and Botswana which are much larger. These points emphasise that no grouping is perfect, and readers should bear such considerations in mind when going through the chapters.

Finally, it is perhaps necessary to explain one of the group of statistical indicators which precedes each case study, namely the Human Development Index. Although the index is increasingly used to supplement such conventional ones as per capita GNP, it may not be familiar to all readers. The index is based on average life expectancy, adult literacy, and the power to buy commodities for satisfying basic

needs. The index seeks to avoid the problems of GNP figures, which do not adequately account for either national differences in purchasing power or the distorting effects of official exchange rates. The index places countries on a scale of zero (worst off) to one (best off). For more detailed explanation of the construction and interpretation of the index, readers are referred to UNDP (1990, pp.13-15).

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