FOREWORD

The Commonwealth Secretariat through its Management and Training Services Division has been providing extensive assistance to Commonwealth governments confronting the challenge of securing administrative and managerial improvements in the public sector. The Division's analyses of major trends and opportunities for public sector reform are complemented by its tailored consultancy and training packages designed in response to national and regional needs.

The current widespread debate concerning the managerial and structural options which will best fit the public service for the challenges of the next century touches the very centre of the questions concerning the role and responsibilities of the governments of the future.

The structure and processes of the overall public sector, that area of national social and economic life which is directly answerable to government, are significant in two ways. They serve to deliver, or to fail to deliver, the policy objectives of government, and they serve as a marker which government unavoidably sets down concerning accountability and transparency in national affairs, and the legal and constitutional framework for development.

As the range of structural options and accountability relationships utilised within the public sector increases, the complexity and diversity of that sector is growing. Assessing the strategic options for the public sector requires a clear understanding of the managerial alternatives and the actual and potential capacities of the core public service. I believe that this publication, and its companion volumes, is a significant contribution towards that understanding.

The Public Service Country Profile Series has grown out of a larger publication series examining current good practices and new developments in public service management. *The Commonwealth Portfolio* is a distillation and analysis of innovations and best practices in public service management from across the Commonwealth.

The Public Service Country Profile Series sets out the results of a mapping exercise, country by country, to provide an unprecedented insight into the real managerial and structural changes under way in the public service.

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