

## CONCLUSION

Public service reforms, of which a key component has been the rethinking of public service delivery, have been driven by economic pressures and by increasing expectations from consumers, and have been enabled by the renewed sense of managerial possibility which has emerged internationally. This possibility consists, as far as service delivery is concerned, of a wider range of alternative mechanisms and potential service providers than had previously been envisaged.

Maximising the potential within the new public service delivery paradigm depends on governments' capacity to afford, but also their willingness to manage new strategies. Where it is clear that improvements in both efficiency and service quality are to be had with the involvement of the private sector to varying degrees, it is the responsibility of government to mobilise this private sector. Privatisation, contracting out or partnership with NGOs need not be seen as a surrender of government responsibility in the interests of cost-cutting, but rather as part of a more strategic approach to public service delivery.

This publication has shown that the new approach must take into account a whole variety of factors and manifests itself in various ways. Quality management and the involvement of public servants in the renewal process are the origins of improved service delivery. The reorientation of the public service to a results-based focus then allows for a better assessment of which of the variety of potential mechanisms best suits the effective provision of a particular service. Innovations in the realm of information technology have also proved highly effective in contributing to improved service delivery. Structural change must also be reflected in a closer, more public focus on the particular needs of client citizens, and an emphasis on the values at the heart of a properly accountable civil service. Finally, a full reappraisal of regulatory controls on service providers needs to be undertaken in order to ensure that government neither restricts their autonomy too far nor allows them to neglect their duty to serve the larger public good.

In setting out the various practices for better service provision that have emerged across the Commonwealth in recent years, this publication has attempted to emphasise choice. As new techniques for best meeting citizens needs emerge, it is clear that developing countries have many more options to consider in building an effective public service than the industrialised nations have ever had in the past. Adopting techniques of customer service from abroad or from the private sector need not be indicative of a public service struggling to keep up with the demands placed on it. The Commonwealth experience shows that strategic management of public service delivery can ensure the place of the public sector at the forefront of the modernisation process.