

Foreword

Small island developing states (SIDS) are among the most vulnerable countries in the world. This inherent vulnerability stems from high dependence on a narrow range of exports and on strategic imports, environmental susceptibility, limited institutional capacity and limited opportunities for diversification. The question of how SIDS can address this inherent vulnerability has occupied policy-makers at national, regional and international levels for many years.

In 1994, the international community agreed on the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of small island developing states (BPOA), which provides guidelines for SIDS to pursue sustainable development as an important avenue of addressing inherent vulnerability. The UN Millennium Development Goals provide a common global set of national targets and indicators for assessing progress with sustainable development. The 2005 Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action highlights outstanding, new and emerging concerns with respect to the sustainable development of SIDS and sets out principles for overcoming them. The 2010 review of the Mauritius Strategy recognised the need for more sustained and effective measures to implement sustainable development in all the economic, social and environmental sectors which are important to SIDS.

This book describes and sets out rigorously and systematically the concepts, tools and strategies through which SIDS can bring the implementation of the 2005 Mauritius Strategy into the mainstream of governance for achieving sustainable development. The book comes at a time when the world is once again focused on sustainable development, as the 20-year anniversary of the seminal Rio Earth Summit approaches in 2012. The volume is especially important because of its explicit focus on the challenges and perspectives of SIDS. The tools outlined in this book are presented through the experience of SIDS in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

This publication offers a range of tools in the development and implementation of policy options for SIDS. It provides examples of tools used in devising strategies; tools for the design of the laws, finance and economics for implementing the strategies; tools used for extending strategy through social and environmental perspectives; plus tools for monitoring progress in sustainable development.

This book is the latest in a series of publications produced by the Commonwealth on small states and sustainable development. The Commonwealth Secretariat has a long history of

assisting small states through analysis, research, advocacy, consensus building and project implementation. Seminal analytical work and research include: the 1985 publication *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* – the first major international study to highlight the inherent vulnerability of small states to external forces; the 1997 publication *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability*; and the 2000 Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force report on small states *Small States: Meeting Challenges in the Global Economy*, which mobilised the concerted support of international organisations to assist small states. The Commonwealth Secretariat is pleased to have worked with a number of leading thinkers on small states and sustainable development in the production of this book. The policy options outlined in this book are, therefore, of particular relevance and assistance to small states committed to the goal of sustainable development.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to give special thanks to Mark Griffith of the United Nations Environment Programme who provided invaluable advice in the formulation of this publication whilst he did his sabbatical at the Commonwealth Secretariat. Thanks are also due to colleagues at the Commonwealth Secretariat: Janet Strachan, Guy Bentham, Nicola Perou and Andrew Armitage for their advice and support in the development of this publication. We would also like to thank Cletus Springer for his considered and detailed comments on the text; and to Padma Lal while she worked at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Garfield Barnwell and the Caribbean Community Secretariat, for their facilitation. Finally, we are grateful to members of an advisory group that met in the wings of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in 2006 for an informal brainstorming session on Commonwealth support to implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, with reference to national sustainable development planning in SIDS. They included: David Barrett; Dirk Troost; Albert Nita; Espen Ronneberg; Rohan Richards; Cheryl Ramsubeik; Donna McRae-Smith; Lionel Nurse; Coral Pasisi; Hugh Sealy; Diane Quarless; Mary Pat Silveria and Linda Brice.