

# Foreword

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by the Commonwealth Secretary-General

In recent years, there has been a phenomenal growth of interest in issues related to governance and corruption. This reflects, in part, increasing acceptance of the proposition that poor governance and corruption are corrosive of economic and social development. At their meeting in Edinburgh in 1997, Commonwealth Heads of Government underscored the importance of good governance, including increased openness in economic decision-making, and eliminating corruption through greater transparency, accountability and the application of the rule of law. At their request, I established a small group of eminent experts, representative of the Commonwealth's diversity, to undertake a study on these issues and recommend ways in which the Commonwealth could promote good governance and fight corruption.

The Expert Group was chaired initially by Dr Mahbub ul Haq (a former Finance Minister of Pakistan) and, following his tragic death, by Dr Kwesi Botchwey (a former Finance Minister of Ghana). It met three times in 1998-99, receiving guidance during the course of its work from meetings of Commonwealth Finance and Law Ministers respectively. The Framework for Commonwealth Principles on Promoting Good Governance and Combating Corruption, and the comprehensive Report that accompanies it in this volume, are the fruits of the Group's collective wisdom and dedicated work.

In Durban last year, Commonwealth Heads of Government welcomed the Group's Report and endorsed the Framework for Commonwealth Principles as the basis for an approach of 'zero tolerance' to all types of corruption at national and global levels. They underscored that the Commonwealth's commitment and work in promoting good governance and preventing corruption must be credible, tangible and visible. At their request, the Commonwealth Secretariat is now formulating strategies to facilitate the implementation of the Framework and for progress to be reviewed at regular intervals.

The Expert Group's work has helped to clarify the causes and consequences of poor governance and corruption, as well as to identify the elements of national strategies that countries could adopt to combat corruption effectively. Based on the over-arching principle of 'zero tolerance' of corruption as the bedrock of national anti-corruption strategies, the Group advocates a three-pronged approach: *prevent* corruption; *enforce* laws against it; and *mobilise public opinion* against

corrupt behaviour. It has also broken new ground by examining the global dimensions of corruption and identifying gaps in current international efforts and initiatives to fight it. It recommends a global compact against corruption that could take the form of a universal, legally binding inter-governmental instrument, negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations.

I am pleased to commend the Expert Group's conclusions and recommendations to governments, to the private sector and to civil society generally, both within and beyond the Commonwealth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emeka Anyaoku', written in a cursive style.

Emeka Anyaoku  
28 March 2000