

## Preface

---

The Commonwealth Secretariat, working closely with the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS), has become an important site of expertise, leadership and co-ordination on sport for development and peace (SDP). SDP brings the power of sport to the solution of some of the most difficult challenges of humankind, such as the realisation of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. The Commonwealth Secretariat now contributes to the formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of government policy related to SDP. It has published surveys of the most important interventions, no mean contribution in a rapidly emerging field with a variety of causes, approaches and organisations; catalogued and publicised examples of 'best practice'; convened consultations of experts and practitioners; and communicated its findings to international forums, not the least of which have been the regular meetings of the Commonwealth sport and youth ministers.<sup>1</sup>

During the last five years, the Secretariat's primary activities have advanced from advocacy – making the case for SDP as an effective tool of development – to research-based policy development, to policy implementation. For example, in July of 2012, at the Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting in London on the eve of the Olympic Games, it issued guidelines for policy and programme development that incorporated the most up-to-date research from scholars and programme assessments from around the world.<sup>2</sup> In 2012, it began working with selected Commonwealth governments on SDP policy and strategy development, with a view to assisting with the incorporation of the guidelines into appropriate national policies. In the coming months, this work will be extended to other Commonwealth governments.

In a community of 53 nations devoted to 'development, democracy and diversity', the systematic, policy-based recruitment of sport – arguably the Commonwealth's most visible cultural expression – to the betterment of peoples, especially their health, education, safety and equity within their societies, is an encouraging step. It has come about as a result of the eloquent, persistent advocacy of Commonwealth leaders, especially Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma, the heart-warming example of the hundreds of young sportswomen and

sportsmen from different parts of the Commonwealth who have initiated and served in SDP programmes, and the effectiveness of the most prominent government and non-government organisation (NGO) programmes, such as the UK's International Inspiration, the Australian Sport Outreach Program and India's Magic Bus. In 2011, the force of these arguments was recognised in the recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) charged with the responsibility of recommending a strategy for renewing the Commonwealth, and then given the full weight of policy by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in their meeting in Perth, Australia. Among other steps, the EPG recommended that:

*The Secretariat should be authorised to play a co-ordinating role through policy analysis, training and development, data collection, monitoring and evaluation, to help Commonwealth member states develop 'Sport for Peace and Development' initiatives.<sup>3</sup>*

That is the work now underway.

This collection of papers, commissioned and edited by the Commonwealth Secretariat, was prepared to inform and enrich the deliberations of CABOS and the work of the Secretariat. It reflects the most critical thinking and most urgent debates among leading scholars and practitioners. It is now being published in its own right as a contribution to the knowledge of everyone with an interest in sport for development and peace – policy-makers, scholars, practitioners, sports leaders, students, youth leaders and corporate sponsors – as the international community prepares to develop new overarching goals for development post-2015, including the challenge of reducing the escalating increase in non-communicable diseases.

Today, there is an urgent need to go beyond the confident platitudes and develop a much more careful understanding of what works and what does not work in SDP. The research makes clear that sport by itself is insufficient to make beneficial change, but that a well-co-ordinated multi-sectoral approach is necessary. Since sport can harm as well as empower, it is important to ensure the safety and security of participants, especially girls and women, at all times. Most of all, the research tells us that both policy and programme planning, no matter how well intentioned or generous, must begin with the aspirations, needs and strengths of

the intended beneficiaries, and engage them directly in the design of programmes and the monitoring and evaluation of results.

These papers offer a challenging, illuminating contribution to our knowledge, underscoring not only the significant benefits of SDP, but the difficult questions policy-makers and professionals must address. I hope it becomes the first in a series of such annual publications.

**Professor Bruce Kidd**

University of Toronto

Former Chair of Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport

**Notes**

1. See, for example, the CABOS reports to the Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meetings of 2006 (Melbourne), 2008 (Beijing), 2010 (Delhi) and 2012 (London).
2. These have now been published as T Kay and O Dudfield (2013), *The Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.
3. Report of the Eminent Persons Group to Commonwealth Heads of Government (2011), *A Commonwealth of the People: Time for Urgent Reform*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 149.