

# Foreword

At their meeting in September this year, the Commonwealth Finance Ministers will discuss gender-responsive budget (GRB) initiatives. For the first time, a group of finance ministers have agreed to include, as a specific agenda item, gender concerns as they relate to macroeconomics and development. This is a significant step in the process of advancing gender equality.

The willingness of Commonwealth Finance Ministers to explore the relevance and application of these initiatives to government budgets is a testimony of the value of gender budget work and the role of the Commonwealth in its development and promotion. This accessible book will prove extremely useful for those interested in learning more about GRB initiatives.

This publication builds on the previous work, *Gender Budgets Make Cents*, which provided an overview of GRB initiatives, the framework, evolution and lessons learned. This companion title was compiled in response to the need to share 'good practice' in gender budget work based on the documentation and detailed analysis of country studies. The depth and quality of information contained in these chapters will be of immense value to anyone interested in implementing or strengthening existing gender budget work.

The development of the Commonwealth Secretariat's work in this area has been the product of a collaborative effort among a number of important actors whom I would like to recognise.

Commonwealth governments deserve much credit for their support of GRB initiatives, primarily Finance and Women's Ministers who have provided the leadership. There is also a need to recognise the outstanding work of civil society organisations, many of which have been the catalysts for gender budget work at the country level. By engaging these different actors, this programme exemplifies the call in the 2002 Commonwealth Heads of Government Coolom Communiqué for stronger links between Commonwealth governments, civil society and NGOs. In a world of decreasing resources and increasing need, the partnership between the Commonwealth Secretariat, International Development Research Centre and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and collaboration with a number of other agencies including the Asian Development

Bank, Pacific Islands Forum, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations Development Programme has been crucial to the growth and expansion of this programme.

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**Nancy Spence**

*Director, Social Transformation Programmes Division  
Commonwealth Secretariat*