

Foreword

With one third of the world's population, \$2 trillion in trade, 23 per cent of world trade, 40 per cent of the membership of the World Trade Organisation and 14 of the world's 48 least developed countries, the Commonwealth has become an important voice in world trade debates. Our interest in globalisation and the effects of trade liberalisation is therefore not an academic one, but is driven by our desire to ensure that the opportunities created by globalisation benefit all Commonwealth citizens.

In particular, these opportunities can help women in business in Commonwealth countries become global players, especially if they are operating in sectors open to international trade. But there are also challenges. Trade barriers often prevent businesspeople – particularly businesswomen – from taking full advantage of new markets. Moreover, insufficient knowledge of the rules of the global trading system and their implications for women-owned businesses prevents many women entrepreneurs from successfully competing in overseas markets.

Against this background, I am particularly pleased by the publication of this businesswoman's trade and best practices guide, *Commonwealth Businesswomen: Trade Matters, Best Practices and Success Stories*. The book provides solid background information on trade issues and gives an insight into the mandates of organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The publication also gives us a glimpse of the excellent business skills, creativity, and fortitude, which have typified the contribution of businesswomen to Commonwealth economies.

The businesswomen featured in this guide lead by example. They define success by their own measure but also keep a watchful eye on the global environment within which they operate. As hands-on operators at the forefront of trade, they are in a position to provide valuable contributions to the discussions on trade and globalisation and to offer concrete solutions to some of the issues faced by many others elsewhere in the Commonwealth and beyond.

I have found this book refreshing, insightful and inspiring. I certainly hope you will find it as useful.

Donald C. McKinnon

Commonwealth Secretary-General