

Foreword

The studies collated in this book were commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat to help to further improve the Commonwealth Resilience Framework: a conceptual framework for identifying policy measures for building the resilience of small states. For over three decades, the Commonwealth has championed the cause of small states by raising international awareness of their vulnerability and their sustainable development needs. The Commonwealth Resilience Framework includes an index to measure countries' ability to absorb external shocks caused by adverse global economic conditions, natural disasters and extreme weather events, and an assessment tool to identify key policies for building resilience that can be embedded in national planning.

Building resilience is an important element of efforts by small states to withstand inherent and policy-induced vulnerabilities and to fully embrace and benefit from globalisation. In 2004, the Secretariat and Professor Lino Briguglio of the University of Malta developed a resilience framework that identified the key requirements for resilience as macroeconomic stability, market efficiency, good governance, good environmental governance, and equitable and inclusive social development. This framework was successfully employed to conduct vulnerability/resilience profiling on the ground in three small island states: Saint Lucia, Seychelles and Vanuatu. The findings were published in *Profiling Vulnerability and Resilience: A Manual for Small States* (Briguglio et al. 2010).

The global economic crisis of 2008–2010 underscored the importance of strong institutions to countries' ability to cope with and respond to shocks, in particular the financial regulatory regime – an element not explicitly included in the original resilience framework. Small states found it especially challenging to recover from the crisis and experienced a period of prolonged economic downturn that lagged significantly behind the global recovery. In addition, environmental resource management and social development issues were not adequately captured in the original work, largely because of lack of data. Both these omissions were the prompt for the Secretariat to revisit and revise the resilience framework as part of its work to address the development challenges of small states.

In 2013 the Secretariat convened a group of experts from small states across economic, social and environmental disciplines to contribute to the development of the resilience framework. The four resulting studies form the main chapters of this book.

The studies provide insights into how to build resilience, inform effective policy formulation for small states, and identify potential areas for regional and international

development partners to provide support. With the rich analysis and wealth of information on addressing development challenges of small states, this book will be of interest to policy-makers in small states, experts and academics working in this area.

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