

# 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 The Mandate

43. The Expert Group on Development and Democracy was established by the Commonwealth Secretary-General in pursuance of the following mandate given by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Coolumb, Australia, in March 2002:

44. “Recognising the links between democracy and good governance on the one hand, and poverty, development and conflict on the other, we call on the Commonwealth Secretary-General to constitute a high-level expert group to recommend ways in which we could carry forward the Fancourt Declaration. This group should focus on how democracies might best be supported in combating poverty, and should report to the next CHOGM.”

45. In interpreting this mandate the Expert Group has drawn its inspiration from the shared values of development and democracy within Commonwealth member states as expressed in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991 and the Fancourt Commonwealth Declaration of 1999. The Harare Principles recognise the need to protect and promote the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth, including democratic processes and institutions, the rule of law and human rights. The Principles also demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development and the alleviation of poverty. The Fancourt Commonwealth Declaration on Globalisation and People-Centred Development calls for the forces of globalisation to be channelled towards the elimination of poverty and the empowerment of human beings to lead fulfilling lives. It emphasises the importance of democratic freedoms and good governance, and stresses that development processes should be participatory and give a voice to the poor and vulnerable. In both the Harare and Fancourt Declarations, development and democracy are considered not only as goals in their own rights, but as interdependent and mutually reinforcing.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.2 Overview

46. The central theme of this Report is that democracy and pro-poor development can and should be mutually reinforcing. It recognises that poor country democracies face particular challenges in the contemporary world that require urgent domestic and international action. The Report emphasises the central role of states, markets and civil society, and focuses on development policies that in themselves uphold and

promote democratic values. In short, this Report is about making democracy work for pro-poor development.

47. Development and democracy are complex processes, and it would be impossible for any report to provide a detailed analysis of every possible means of promoting them individually and together. The Expert Group has thus been selective in its attentions and focused on the interactions between development and democracy.

48. This Report is global in geographical scope and attempts to examine patterns of development and democracy worldwide. However, it pays special attention to the experiences of development and democracy throughout the Commonwealth, especially among the more vulnerable communities including small states.

49. The analysis begins in Section 2 by outlining a new approach to development and democracy and suggests that the crisis of global poverty and weaknesses of democratisation processes in many countries can be addressed by using democratically-oriented policies to tackle poverty. This approach, which must provide a role for each of the state, the market and civil society, has the potential to result in both pro-poor development and deeper democracy.

50. Section 3 examines the problem of poverty from a Commonwealth perspective.

51. In Section 4 the Report highlights major national obstacles to pro-poor development such as ineffective state administration, corruption, inadequate education and health systems, and environmental degradation. It argues that neither development nor democracy can be imported and that it is therefore essential for national governments, rather than international institutions, to take the lead in promoting pro-poor development and democracy (Section 4.1 and 4.2). The Expert Group provides specific policy recommendations, for instance to promote democratic accountability of government expenditure and revenue, that can be implemented at the national and sub-national level to ensure development and democracy (Section 4.3).

52. Section 5 focuses on the obstacles to pro-poor development and democracy that exist at the international level. First, the Report explores global economic problems concerning the international trade regime, private capital flows, debt and aid (Section 5.1). Second, it examines how international institutions could be reformed to promote development and democracy more effectively (Section 5.2). Third, it describes how conflict and insecurity have affected the pursuit of development and democracy (Section 5.3). The Group's policy recommendations at the international level are designed to encourage reforms in these three areas (Section 5.4).

53. Both Sections 4 and 5 highlight innovative and concrete policy responses from

particular organisations and governments around the globe, including some from the Commonwealth. These are case studies of ‘exemplary good practice’. They are *not* blueprints for development that the Expert Group endorses as ‘one size fits all’ development solutions. Rather they provide practical ideas and inspiration for how it is possible to make democracy work for pro-poor development in the diverse contexts of the real world. By taking this approach the Expert Group hopes to refrain from timid platitudes and instead to open up vigorous debate around substantive options in complex policy arenas.

54. Section 6 contains the Expert Group’s concluding remarks on development and democracy.