

Preface

The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development presents a vision of:

“a world in which women and men have equal rights and opportunities at all stages of their lives to express their creativity in all fields of human endeavour, and in which women are respected and valued as equal and able partners in establishing values of social justice, equity, democracy and respect for human rights. Within such a framework of values, women and men will work in collaboration and partnership to ensure people-centred sustainable development for all nations”.

Commonwealth
Secretariat, 1995d

In order to assist Commonwealth governments in realising this vision, Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs mandated the Secretariat to develop the concept and method of the Gender Management System (GMS), a comprehensive network of structures, mechanisms and processes for bringing a gender perspective to bear on all government policies, programmes and projects. Its success depends upon a broad-based partnership in society in which government consults and acts co-operatively with other key stakeholders, who include civil society and the private sector.

This *Quick Guide to the Gender Management System* presents the essential points of the *Gender Management System Handbook*, which has been produced to assist member governments in meeting their commitment to implementing the Plan of Action. It is hoped that the quick guide and the full-length handbook will be used by development policy-makers, planners, field staff and others, in conjunction with other publications in the Gender Management System Series. The handbook is designed to be sufficiently flexible to allow users to adopt those elements of the GMS that are most appropriate to national circumstances and adapt others to their countries' specific needs.

The development of the *Gender Management System Handbook* and the *Quick Guide to the Gender Management System* has been a

collective effort between the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender and Youth Affairs Division and many individuals and groups. Their contributions to the thinking behind the GMS are gratefully acknowledged. In particular, I would like to thank the following: Meetings of Women's Affairs Ministers which supported the development of the GMS and encouraged us to move the project forward; participants at the first GMS meeting in Britain in February 1997 and at the GMS Workshop in Malta in April 1998, who provided valuable input and feedback; and the Steering Committee on the Plan of Action (SCOPA). I am also most grateful to: the various consultants who drafted, contributed inputs and edited the handbook in collaboration with the staff of the Gender and Youth Affairs Division, including Daniel Woolford, Consultant Editor for the GMS publications, Audrey Ingram Roberts, and Carol Miller; and the staff of the Gender Affairs Department, Gender and Youth Affairs Division, particularly Ms Eleni Stamiris, former Director of the Division, who took the lead in formulating the GMS concept and mobilising the various stakeholders in its development, Dr Judith May-Parker who provided substantive editorial input, and Dr Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Project Co-ordinator of the Gender Management System Series, who guided the project through to publication.

We hope that this resource series will be of genuine use to you in your efforts to mainstream gender.

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