

FOREWORD

by the

Commonwealth Secretary-General

The Harare Commonwealth Declaration identified just and honest government as a key element of Commonwealth values. Public Service Reform was accordingly included as one of the priority programme areas in the Secretariat's work plan, in recognition that an efficient public service is a necessary underpinning of justice and honest government.

The Commonwealth has a strong comparative advantage in this area. Commonwealth co-operation in relation to public administration is facilitated immeasurably by the similarities that exist between all Commonwealth countries in relation to the nature of its underlying principles and values of neutrality.

Many Commonwealth governments have experienced pressures for reform and have adopted similar strategies by re-defining the relationship between policy-making and administration; introducing greater accountability, task-definition, performance measurement and delegation of the control of resources; the need for closer collaboration with the private sector; the acceptance of continuing organisational review; and the importance of the quality of service.

The Secretariat's work with Commonwealth governments highlights both the diversity and the commonality of reform programmes, and the key distinctions between domestic and external pressures for change. It also reveals a movement from macro concerns over the role government should play in socio-economic development, to a more focused concern for the development of specific strategies for improvement in public service.

In summary, the debate has moved from the problems to the solutions.

This publication illustrates the degree to which new areas of consensus are emerging in the implementation of public service reform in Commonwealth countries, and I hope it will make a useful contribution in the review and development of national strategies in the management of public service reform.

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