

## FOREWORD

A strong and achieving public service is a necessary condition for a competitively successful nation. The Management and Training Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat assists member governments to improve the performance of the public service through action-oriented advisory services, policy analysis and training. This assistance is supported by funds from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC).

Commonwealth co-operation in public administration is facilitated immeasurably by the strong similarities that exist between all Commonwealth countries in relation to the institutional landscape and the underlying principles and values of a neutral public service. In mapping current and emerging best practices in public service management, the Management and Training Services Division has been able to draw on the most determined, experienced and successful practitioners, managers and policy-makers across the Commonwealth. Their experiences are pointing the way to practical strategies for improvement.

The publication series, *Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement*, provides the reader with access to the experiences and the successes of elected and appointed officials from across the Commonwealth.

Recent wide-ranging reforms have placed tremendous demands on the men and women at the top levels of the public service – in particular the deputy ministers, or permanent secretaries as they are called in most Commonwealth countries, whose responsibility it is to manage unparalleled change while continuing to deliver service to the public.

This publication looks at how permanent secretaries see their jobs, how they require more support, training and feedback from the centre of government, and whether the job of permanent secretary can continue to expand indefinitely, or whether the position should be re-designed.

The series complements other MTSD publications, particularly the *Public Service Country Profile* series which provides a country-by-country analysis of current good practices and developments in public service management. Our aim is to provide practical guidance and to encourage critical evaluation. The *Public Service Country Profile* series sets out the where and the what in public service management. With this new *Strategies for Improvement* series, I believe we are providing the how.

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