

# Foreword

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a long history of assisting small states through analysis, research, advocacy, consensus building and project implementation. This latest publication provides an important contribution to assist small states in formulating policies to build economic resilience to address their inherent vulnerability. The inherent vulnerability of small states stems from their high dependence on a narrow range of exports and on strategic imports such as food and fuel. These features render small states disproportionately exposed to external economic shocks. Other characteristics which pose disadvantages for small states include their limited ability to exploit economies of scale, and their limited opportunities for diversification.

The volume presents the process of resilience building in extensive detail, including clearly set out evidence-based and appropriate concepts, measurements, policy measures and technical assistance issues, information of substantial practical use to policy-makers in small states in resilience building efforts.

This volume is the latest outcome of an ongoing and long-standing collaboration between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of Malta. In recent years this collaboration has led to the development of the Economic Resilience Index and Resilience Building Framework, based on a series of workshops held in Malta; as well as three publications – *Economic Vulnerability and Resilience of Small States* (2004); *Building the Economic Resilience of Small States* (2006) and *Small States and the Pillars of Economic Resilience* (2008). Collectively, these workshops, frameworks and publications have led to the development of a conceptual understanding of how small states can examine their vulnerability and resilience profile and identify policies and projects to help them to withstand exogenous shocks. This conceptual framework has already been piloted with great success in three small states – St Lucia, Seychelles and Vanuatu.

This volume responds directly to the call in Article 81 of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, proposing the establishment of a task force to elaborate a resilience index, supported by the international community.

The Secretariat is pleased to have collaborated with the University of Malta under the leadership of the eminent scholar on vulnerability and small states Professor Lino Briguglio. The dedication and commitment of all other members of the team at the University of Malta – Gordon Cordina, Stephanie Vella and the late Nadia Farrugia – is deeply appreciated. The outstanding contributions of Constance Vigilance and Janet Strachan, who have led this project at the Commonwealth Secretariat, together with past and present colleagues who have contributed to its development, are also recognised.

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