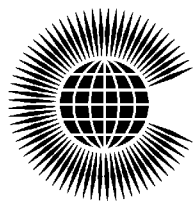


Commonwealth Secretariat



Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting

St Lucia, 6-8 October 2008

FMM(08)(INF)7

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SMALL STATES AGENDA¹

Paper by the Commonwealth Secretariat
(for the information of delegates)

Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
London SW1Y 5HX

September 2008

¹ The Small States Agenda comprises the recommendations of the 2000 ComSec/World Bank Joint Task Force Report and the 2006 Review.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2006 Review² of the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force Report on Small States³ concluded that small states are vulnerable, and that the characteristics identified by the 2000 report as having important implications for the development of small states remain relevant. The review also noted that new challenges have emerged for small states. These characteristics and new challenges includes remoteness and insularity; susceptibility to natural disasters; limited institutional capacity; limited diversification; a high degree of openness; the erosion of trade preferences for traditional exports; a rapid rise in the debt burden; youth unemployment; security and crime; and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

2. To assist small states to cope with their inherent vulnerability and to foster integration of these countries into the global economy, the 2000 Report recommended a framework of action for each of the partner institutions⁴ and the 2006 Review recommended an outward oriented development strategy for small states. The areas identified for assistance for the Commonwealth Secretariat as set out in the 2000 Report are as follows: tackling volatility, vulnerability and natural disasters; strengthening capacity; meeting challenges and opportunities of globalisation; and adapting to the changing global trade regime. The 2006 review recommended an outward-oriented development strategy for small states which should include the key components of: increasing competitiveness and improving the investment climate; empowering and improving the quality, health and safety of the small states human resources; regional cooperation; building environmental and other resilience mechanisms to offset the unique vulnerabilities of small states; and an increased role of the international community.

3. The purpose of this paper is to inform small states of the work of the Secretariat in implementing the framework of the 2000 Report and assisting small states to implement an outward-oriented development strategy. The paper is divided into four sections-tackling vulnerability and building economic resilience; strengthening capacity and empowering human resources; promoting integration into the global economy and increased competitiveness; and assisting small states to benefit from international trade and international and regional cooperation.

TACKLING VULNERABILITY AND BUILDING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

4. The Secretariat's approach to assisting small states in this area involved the implementation of a number of projects that offered policy advice to small states and advocacy on behalf of small states on a number of issues. They were provided on a number of issues including debt, resilience building, sustainable development and the provision of analytical information on small states.

² Toward an Outward-Oriented Development Strategy for Small States: Issues, Opportunities and Resilience Building (August 2006)

³ Small States: Meeting the challenges in the global economy – Report of the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States (April 2000)

⁴ Partner Institutions are the Commonwealth Secretariat, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO), European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and Regional Development Banks.

Addressing the Emerging Debt Problems of Small States

5. A framework to address the emerging debt problems of middle income small states was developed. This framework, which should be applied on a case by case basis, includes: fiscal discipline; improved debt recording and management; insurance and grant financing mechanisms that respond to the reconstruction and rehabilitation needs following natural disasters and other shocks; continued grant and concessional financing; and adequate compensation for preference erosion. In addition, the Secretariat worked towards enhancing debt data quality, strengthening capacity for prudent debt management policies and strategies in the Caribbean Region, the Gambia, the South Pacific region and Mauritius. These interventions particularly targeted the issue of growing internal debt, which is becoming an issue of concern for many small states.

Building Resilience in Small States

6. The Secretariat continued to implement its work which aims at enabling small states to build resilience to their inherent vulnerability. Over the past year, this work included inter alia, a seminar for small states representatives in Washington DC, and the production of a new publication, “Pillars of Economic Resilience” which contains policy advice that can assist small states in their resilience building efforts. More recently, the Secretariat has begun to implement a pilot project in Seychelles and St. Lucia, which aims at assisting each small state to profile their vulnerability and resilience in order to implement projects that will build the country’s resilience. In addition, the Secretariat is conducting research, in collaboration with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNIRSD), aimed at identifying the challenges relating to social policies and how certain countries have managed to improve their social indicators despite being vulnerable. 14 country studies are being prepared with an aim of better understating the social policy challenges. The research findings will be shared with the small states and best practices identified.

Mainstreaming Sustainable Development in Small States

7. The Secretariat held a side-event in the wings of the UNCSD and produced a publication on sustainable development. These were successful in informing small states of the research which they can use in their endeavour to achieve sustainable development. The papers discussed at the side event were on financing sustainable development, national planning for sustainable development and resilience building. The publication included papers on the development of national sustainable development strategies, renewable energy and energy efficiency and climate change. In addition, the Secretariat assisted Samoa to implement its national biodiversity plans. Technical support was also provided to the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Roundtable for Nature Conservation in developing capacities to implement the national biodiversity plans in the Pacific.

Climate Change

8. Over the past year, small states in the Caribbean benefited from the expertise of a Resource Economist and a regional workshop on climate change. Training was also provided to climate change negotiators and climate advisors were made available to all small states to facilitate regional events and support climate change advocacy work. The Secretariat also

facilitated a regional workshop on the role of youth in mitigating the impact of climate change.

Small States Bulletin and Online Database on Small States

9. Volume 12 of the annual Small States Economic Review and Basic Statistics which provides researchers, policy makers and development practitioners with a unique set of statistics was published. In addition, the Secretariat is developing a small states online database. This database which will be a valuable source of development indicators on small states will be made available on the Secretariat's website by the end-2008.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY AND EMPOWERING HUMAN RESOURCES

10. The Secretariat implemented a number of projects to strengthen capacity in small states public sector and local government. Small States human resources were also empowered through projects in education, health and gender.

Public Policy Development and Management

11. The Secretariat conducted a training workshop for 25 participants from the Caribbean. The major focus of the programme was public policy development. Topics included food security, energy security, national security, and environment. Interest was high among the participants and they shared varied experiences about how policy is developed and implemented in their respective countries. These presentations provided public servants with the opportunity to evaluate policy failure.

Legislative Drafting

12. The Secretariat continued to sponsor a three-month course at the University of Guyana for Caribbean countries. The aim of this programme is to build capacity in these countries to draft legislation. Due to their small size, these countries have very few legislative drafters. There is regular follow up on the trained candidates to analyse the need for further training and to assess the need for larger systemic change in the programme and in the countries.

Strategic Planning for Senior Public Officers

13. Training was provided to participants from the Caribbean in the process of strategic planning. Participants were challenged to re-think their concepts and approach to strategic planning by identifying their weaknesses and strengths using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis.

Education

14. The Secretariat provides advocacy, policy advice and capacity building on a large number of education related issues including development of tertiary education in Botswana; advocacy for the pan-Commonwealth Recognition of Teacher Qualifications and Professional Recognition through the establishment of a Steering Group; research; Multi-grade Training Workshop in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions and a study that seeks to stem boys' underachievement in education.

15. There has also been the establishment of the Virtual University for Small States (VUSS), recognition of Small State contribution to education good practice in the Commonwealth and a Gender Analysis of Classroom and other Schooling Processes. The Secretariat also supported the establishment of the first UNESCO/Commonwealth Professorial Chair on HIV/AIDS and Education in the University of the West Indies, for three years, beginning October 2005.

Gender

16. The Secretariat is continuing its efforts to mainstream gender concerns across the sectors in small states. In this regard, technical support and facilitation was provided to the Botswana Ministry of Agriculture in developing a policy framework on Gender and Agriculture. There was also technical assistance to mainstream gender and HIV/Aids in the Caribbean. In addition, capacity building workshops on gender and trade and on gender mainstreaming in the Public Service were conducted.

17. Support is also been provided to various institutions such as the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership and capacity building workshops are being held to benefit small states. The themes of the recent workshops held included the role of Women Parliamentary Caucuses; the role of Asian women in local government; strengthening National Women's Machineries; and addressing the marginalisation of indigenous and tribal women'. The Secretariat also placed a gender expert at CARICOM/PANCAP (Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS) to provide technical inputs to the review of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on HIV.

Health

18. The Secretariat has been assisting the health sector in a number of small states. In the Maldives, the Secretariat has implemented a post tsunami package of support to enhance health care service delivery in the Maldives. Currently technical support is being provided through two projects aimed at strengthening the National Medical Council and building capacity of Community Health Care Managers.

19. There has also been clinical updates on antiretroviral therapy (ART) for doctors and nurses in West and East Africa, support to Swaziland to address capacity erosion in ART delivery, strengthening four regional HIV/AIDS treatment monitoring sites in Swaziland, development of a Midwifery Tutors Programme, and the conducting of a study to collect data on Maternal, Infant and Child survival interventions in the Commonwealth. Workshops to ensure human resources for health and health workforce planning in the Pacific, Caribbean and Africa were also convened.

Local Government

20. In small states, local government is often the most vital and relevant level of governance. However, this form of government tends to face issues of lack of resources, remote location, and fragile environment. In view of this, the Secretariat has implemented a number of programmes to assist local government. A Discussion Paper Series on various topics concerning Local Government has been launched. The first issue covered the topic of Climate Change.

21. In Africa, the Secretariat organised a workshop in April 2008 in the Gambia for officials from central and local government. The workshop noted that effective service delivery is part of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme and that this policy reform intends to decentralise executive and fiscal powers from central ministries to local authorities. The workshop transferred learning specifically from Commonwealth Africa to identify optimum policies for reform and the role of leadership.

22. The workshop organised by the Secretariat in Swaziland served to augment the ability of local governments for effective service delivery to citizens. Local government officials who are in charge of local administration attended the workshop, held in February 2008. The workshop was successful in facilitating the creation of a unified form of local government for urban and rural areas. Part of the strategy is for local government to implement Millennium Development Goals. The workshop enabled top policy-makers in the country to understand the challenges of implementing local government reforms and finding appropriate solutions.

23. The Secretariat in its support for the Caribbean Forum of Local Government Ministers (CFLGM) and the Caribbean Regional Local Governance Conference and Consultation undertook a training workshop aimed at enhancing Local Government Administration for Good Governance. 42 senior local government administrators from eight Caribbean countries and territories attended the workshop. In addition, the Secretariat provided an Adviser to the Ministry of Local Government in Jamaica in its capacity as the Secretariat to CFLGM. This forum was established as a result of the recommendations at a symposium jointly organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in 2004. The Regional Local Government Adviser is assisting in the forging of linkages between the CFLGM and other member countries in the region with the overall aim of strengthening relationships, building capacity, augmenting access to resources, and formulating regional strategies, which enhance local democracy. The mandate of the CFTC expert includes assisting in the creation and implementation of mechanisms, which provide sustainability of the CFLGM.

24. Pacific Island governments are introducing decentralisation to promote effective participation of the people on issues affecting their community and life. The Secretariat has provided the services of a CFTC expert for the Pacific Local Government Project. The expert provides technical support to the selected countries that are introducing local government reforms. It focuses on: Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. This regional project addresses the challenges faced by local governments in the Pacific in a changing and complex environment. The capacity building project is being implemented as an outcome of the Commonwealth Secretariat sponsored Regional Symposium on Local Governance in the Pacific held in Suva in December 2004. Key activities include local leadership and other training, strategic planning, support to local government associations, technical exchanges, research, policy dialogue, workshops and seminars.

Youth Development

25. The Secretariat through its regional youth programmes in Africa, the Caribbean, Pacific and Asia has been implementing a number of initiatives to enhance the capacity of youths and promote youth development. The youth programme activities is being implemented in a number of small states including Botswana, the Gambia, Lesotho,

Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Malta, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Guyana and St. Kitts and Nevis. The activities undertaken included training on mainstreaming HIV/AIDS issues into youth policies and programmes; providing financial and technical support towards the delivery of the Diploma in youth development training programme; providing financial support through the Commonwealth Youth Development Awards initiative; facilitating participation of youths in leadership and management trainings and supporting the development of a national youth policy. Youth entrepreneurship development initiatives in a number of small states were also supported.

PROMOTING INTEGRATION INTO THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND INCREASED COMPETITIVENESS

26. In order to become fully integrated into the global economy and increase their competitiveness, it is essential that small states implement policies that promote economic development and ensure compliance with international best practices and regulations. The Secretariat has been assisting small states in the areas of international standards, financial literacy, sector enhancement and enterprise development.

OECD Sub-Group Meetings and Review of Report on Level Playing Field

27. Over 2007/8 the Secretariat hosted three OECD Level Playing Field subgroup meetings. The meetings allowed small states to have some voice in charting the standards process; a need that became more relevant following the OECD initiative of harmful tax competition and the subsequent publication of countries (mainly small islands) that were on a black list. The Secretariat also commissioned a review of the OECD Level Playing Field Report⁵. The Report seeks to gauge the progress made towards fairer competition in the offshore financial services industry. The Report has been printed and gained attention in publications such as the Economist and the Financial Times.

The Developmental Implications for International Taxation and Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Initiatives

28. The Secretariat, with assistance of First Initiative, completed an assessment of small international financial sectors to determine the costs required to implement international standards which are mandated upon them. The survey covered the sectors in Barbados, Vanuatu and Mauritius and the results indicate that the costs of implementing AML/CFT measures far exceeded the benefits derived over the period under review. While the costs of these measures posed serious challenges to the industries under consideration, the main benefit identified was enhanced reputation, though this brought little financial gains. The survey pointed strongly to the need for expanded dialogue between international standard setters and small states, prior to the implementation of international policies and frameworks. In addition, two training sessions on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) New Assessment Methodology were funded. These were administered to participants in the Caribbean region. The Secretariat also funded an expert to assist three Caribbean countries which were due to be evaluated on their implementation of AML/CFT standards.

⁵ Assessing the Playing Field: International Cooperation in Tax Information Exchange

Financial Literacy

29. The Commonwealth Secretariat has recognised the importance of Financial Literacy to the economic development of member countries. As such the Secretariat has implemented a number of programmes aimed at secondary school children between the ages of 14-17 throughout the Caribbean. The overall aim of the programme is to help pupils use financial information and resources in a confident manner. During 2007/8, training in financial literacy was administered to youths in Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica and Jamaica. The main lessons centre on saving, budgeting, loans/credit risk management and planning for the future. At present student and teacher manuals are being compiled. This would enable countries/groups interested in the programme to independently conduct/follow through on training.

Pension Planning

30. The Secretariat is providing short term technical assistance to Grenada to review their pension plan. As part of this an Actuary is estimating the financial implication of a pension plan. Further, a Pension Planner would provide assistance in creating a pension plan appropriate to the Grenada situation.

Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (CYCI)

31. The Secretariat through its Youth Programme office (CYP) in Africa provided technical support for the development of micro-credit initiatives for youth in a number of African countries including Botswana and Lesotho.

Sector Enhancement

32. The Secretariat worked on enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of various sectors in small states. In Swaziland, the Secretariat provided technical support for the development of the handicraft sector. In Tonga, a feasibility study and business plan for a credit union bank in Tonga was completed. In Botswana, the Secretariat was successful in strengthening farm business management capacity through a programme to provide effective extension services in farm business planning and management to small and medium sized rural farmers. The Secretariat has also been working on the sustainable development of Coastal Fisheries in Pacific Island Countries through support for the preparation of a Pacific Islands Regional Coastal Fisheries Management Policy. In addition, the Secretariat has implemented programmes to strengthen the capacity of agencies and institutions to improve the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of small fisheries business owners. The Secretariat also worked to initiate small business networking skills in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu through training of network facilitators from those countries.

Mining

33. Assistance is being provided to a number of small states to enhance their mining and petroleum sector. The countries benefiting from this support included Belize, the Cook Islands, the Solomon Islands, Seychelles and Swaziland. Through this programme of assistance, countries have been able to enhance their policy and regulatory framework, improve revenue management and public share-owning participation, establish prudent and

sustainable management of oil based revenues and improve negotiations in accordance with internationally accepted principles, standards and practices.

Enterprise Development

34. The Secretariat implemented a number of programmes aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in small states. The countries which benefitted from this programme included Barbados, Belize, Brunei Darussalam, Guyana, Seychelles, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Swaziland. The programme was implemented in a number of areas including developing a set of practical solutions, involving ICT and SME Networking Database, and identifying industries/sectors, products, commodities and services that can be improved. In Namibia, the Secretariat provided support to establish a policy and institutional framework that will help to generate new business start-ups and increase the business performance of existing small enterprises as they become aware of new sources of inputs and are able to reduce transactions costs through group purchasing. A project to promote the linkages between the agriculture and tourism sector was also implemented in Barbados.

Maritime Boundaries and Delineation of the Extended Continental Shelf

35. The Secretariat has been providing assistance in this area to a number of small states including Guyana, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, the Cook Islands and Solomon Islands. The programme of assistance included building capacity for the competitive negotiation of maritime boundaries and improving capacity for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) through legislative reform and assistance to prepare the extended continental shelf submission.

ICT and the Networked Economy

36. The Secretariat in collaboration with the University of the West Indies convened a workshop in the Caribbean on ICT for to promote the use of ICT in the public service. The workshop examined various issues including the macro economic environment wherein ICT needed to be effective and the importance and characteristics of a competitive sector. The Secretariat also convened a symposium on 'Building Partnership for Quality Public Service: Human Resource Development and Training Delivery within CARICOM Member States. The symposium discussed the poor capacity in training institutes in the region, the thematic areas in which training was needed, governance, risk reduction, and disaster preparedness.

Export Strategy

37. The Secretariat has implemented a number of projects on developing national export strategies and enhancing competitiveness. These projects were aimed at improving the enabling environment to increase exports, developing a strategic plan for the export of professional services, improving trade facilitation systems and developing the tourism sector. The countries benefiting from these projects included Botswana, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Dominica Seychelles, St. Lucia, Barbados, Mauritius, Tonga, Samoa and Antigua

ASSISTING SMALL STATES TO BENEFIT FROM INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

38. The Secretariat's assistance on trade has concentrated on multilateral trade negotiations, particularly supporting its members in the Doha and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) negotiations. In addition, the Secretariat continued the implementation of the "Hub & Spokes" project, the aim of which is to promote the effective participation of ACP states in international trade negotiations and re-enforce their capacity to formulate trade policies in compliance with their overall development strategies.

Hub & Spokes

39. The project is implemented through a network of 6 Regional Trade Policy Advisers (RTPAs or "Hubs") attached to: COMESA, SADC, CARICOM, OECS, PIF Secretariats as well as the African Union (AU) Commission and 25 Trade Policy Analysts (TPAs or "Spokes"), 19 of whom are deployed to ministries of trade in ACP countries and 6 of which compliment the work of RTPAs at the regional secretariats. The role of RTPAs includes; carrying out periodic needs assessments to inform region level project support activities, providing trade policy related advice to member states especially ones without Spokes, backstopping trade consultative forums and negotiations at regional level. Spokes undertake national needs assessment that inform national level project support programmes and analytical work that feed into country negotiating positions. In addition, they train and sensitise stakeholders on topical trade issues and backstop national consultative forums and negotiations.

40. Over the past year, 11 small states in COMESA & SADC regions, 5 in Caribbean countries and 3 Pacific Islands benefited from services of Spokes while 5 regional integration secretariats as well as the AU Commission benefited from services of Hub and Spokes respectively. Through interventions by the Hub and Spokes, stakeholders in these countries and regions were trained in areas such as; rules of origin, intellectual property rights, WTO dispute settlement mechanism, trade in service and goods, and were equipped with negotiating skills. Hub and Spokes prepared policy briefs, interpreted legal texts of trade agreements and undertook analytical studies that informed negotiations and greatly improved the quality of submissions in negotiating forums. They also assisted countries in the preparation of their goods and services offers, developed lists of sensitive products and facilitated consultative forums and negotiations.

41. The conclusion EPAs between the European Commission and Caribbean states and interim ones with some African and Pacific counties are attributed in part to the work of Hub & Spokes.

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

42. To support its Small States members in their multilateral trade negotiations, the Secretariat has undertaken analytical studies including the following:

- Analytical Paper on the Future Action by African countries in response to the Rise of the Brazil, India, China and South Africa (BICS). The paper addresses a fundamental issue which is the economic significance of the emerging economies of Brazil, India, China and South Africa and how the impact of

their rapid economic growth, whether positive or negative, is transmitted to developing countries through international trade, international investment and international finance. It also highlights how the rise of the BICS could shift the balance of power and how it will shape international politics in the future through bilateralism and pluralilateralism. Concrete proposals are also provided on how small states and LDCs could form coalitions with BICs to exercise significant influence through multilateralism so that their development interests and concerns are reflected in these fora.

- Aid for Trade Study. Even with greater access to markets, many of the least developed and poorest countries may be unable to use the opportunities that come with more open markets either because of inadequate infrastructure and poorly performing trade-related institutions or policies that create disincentives or impediments to trade and investment. Additional support, including aid for trade, is required to enable them to adjust their domestic policies, develop their infrastructure, upgrade their trade-supporting institutions and production structures and capacities so as to take advantage of new trading opportunities and beneficially integrate into the global trading system.
- Global Partnership for Development Study-Globalization is a necessary but not sufficient condition for development and those developing countries should abandon their obsession for preferential treatment or concessions from developed countries, especially in terms of exemption from non-reciprocity. The paper however contends that developing countries should be allowed more time to implement key trade provisions as agreed and more appropriate consideration should be provided to them given their development status.

43. Recent Commonwealth Secretariat activities on *ACP-EU EPA negotiations* include the following:

- In cooperation with the ACP Secretariat, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened a High Level Technical Meeting on EPAs in Cape Town, 7-8 April 2008. The meeting provided an important opportunity for stakeholders from the ACP regions (selected Trade Ministers, lead-negotiators, capital-based trade officials, Geneva/Brussels based-Ambassadors and academia) to undertake a comparative stock take of the status of the EPA negotiations and to strategize on a way forward towards the conclusion date of December 2008 and end-July 2009 for some sub-regions.
- Analytical Studies were also commissioned by the Secretariat. They were presented at the Cape Town meeting and also circulated to Commonwealth ACP capitals, Brussels and London-based Ambassadors. Studies undertaken included the 'Impact of ACP member states of the EC's offer of Duty free and quota free market access for sugar under EPAs', Studies on Implications on Developing Countries of Bilaterally Negotiated Issues: Government Procurement, Competition Policy & Services, 'Legal Issues under EPA' by Lorand Bartel, Analytical paper on EPA developments by ODI and Value chains Study for ACP.

- EPA Goods and Services Offers and Demands: A 2-year technical assistance program was implemented for the Pacific and Caribbean region which was designed to assist these regions to prepare one of the most technical components of its negotiations i.e. preparation of its EPA Goods and Services offers and demands and its subsequent reflection in their EPA texts as schedules. The program resulted in the effective preparation of the regions in their demands and offers on both goods and services to the EU under EPA and capacity was built through training of their trade officials in the utilization of the datasets and tools which they are utilizing in their FTA negotiations with their other trade partners.

International Organisations/Agencies

44. International organisations/agencies are important for small states in a number of ways: they connect small states with a wider forum of development partners through which needed expertise and resources can be accessed; they set the agenda and standards for development and integrate countries into global arenas. Particularly at regional levels, international and regional organisations share resources, experiences and expertise. Historically, international organisations have been key vehicles for development of small states.

45. However, not all of these organisations have been beneficial or economical for small states. The Secretariat has commissioned a study to develop an International Organisations Assessment Framework. The proposed framework will allow small states to assess the value, benefits and costs of membership to international (including regional) organisations/agencies. Furthermore, when applied, the framework informs decision-making by the state on enhancement of or terminating membership to a particular organisation. The framework is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it offers certain parameters within which flexible qualitative assessments might be made.

CONCLUSION

46. The Commonwealth Secretariat places high importance on advocacy for the concerns of small states. The Secretariat is therefore committed to addressing the concerns of small states in its policies, projects and programmes.