



## **Media Brief**

### **Network of Commonwealth National Election Management Bodies**

The Commonwealth is fundamentally committed to supporting democracy, democratic processes and institutions among member states. Elections are a key element of democratic practice, and election management bodies are pivotal institutions at the heart of the electoral process.

Election management bodies are central to the quality of the democratic and electoral process in a country. An election management body that is independent, impartial, professional and transparent and enjoys the trust of the people can play a crucial role in ensuring the credibility of an election and enhancing public and political confidence in it.

It is clear from our observation of elections that election management bodies are vital democratic institutions and integral to the success of an election. **As such we are now proposing to establish a Commonwealth Network of National Election Management Bodies.**

We hope that the creation of such a Network will help raise the standard of these key institutions and thereby provide great value to members in strengthening the culture of democracy in their respective countries.

A representative group of senior election officials from the Commonwealth met at Marlborough House on 15-16 September 2009 to consider the initiative. The group agreed that the launching of such a Network will be of tangible benefit to national election management bodies in the Commonwealth, enabling them to achieve the highest possible standards.

We are not seeking to create a new institution or duplicate existing initiatives in the field.

The Network will create support mechanisms, promote good practices and facilitate opportunities for peer support, technical assistance and capacity-building for election management bodies across the Commonwealth.

In addition, we will provide a dedicated web portal for Commonwealth election management bodies to:

- (i) facilitate dialogue and exchanges between election managers;
- (ii) develop and disseminate materials on aspects of good electoral practice; and
- (iii) identify specific mechanisms for peer support.

The Secretariat will hold a Pan-Commonwealth Conference of election management bodies in early 2010 to further develop the Network.