

# Commonwealth Secretariat

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## STRATEGIC PLAN 2008/09-2011/12

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan (hereinafter 'the Plan') sets out the overall strategic focus, objectives and expected results of the organization for the four year period 2008/09 – 2011/12. The Plan was approved by the Secretariat's Board of Governors on 15 May 2008, and is the document against which the Board and the Secretariat will measure the progress and impact of its work.
2. Whilst the Plan reflects the Secretariat's rigorous focus on areas in which it can add value, it also provides, as usual, for some flexibility in programme design and responsiveness in delivery. This flexibility and responsiveness will also give scope to the organisation to respond to new challenges and priorities as they arise, and to maximize its ability to develop innovative solutions. The Plan will be subject to a formal Mid-Term Review.
3. The Strategic Plan has a stronger focus (than its predecessor) on learning lessons and articulating expected results. Whilst the structure of the last Strategic Plan 2004/05 – 2007/08 served the organisation well and has thus been largely replicated here, a new section on lessons learned has been included.
4. The Plan sets out the Secretariat's commitment to adopting a rights-based approach to development, and to mainstreaming gender, youth and human rights concerns throughout all levels of its work: strategic, programmatic, project and operational. These concerns therefore are reflected throughout the Plan.
5. The Plan sets out eight interlinked Programmes. Each Programme Statement will continue to have a defined objective, and results and indicators. These will reflect the organisation's mainstreaming commitments. The statements will also articulate the Commonwealth's comparative advantage or 'added value' in that Programme.
6. The Plan reaffirms the Secretariat's focus on the important needs and concerns of small states, and maintains its support for them through activities across the eight Programmes.
7. The Plan also addresses the important issue of *how* the Secretariat does its work. It sets out the organisation's ways of working and modes of delivery, and the importance of strategic partnerships, which can enhance impact, extend its reach, and resources, and help realize innovative ideas, is noted. It contains discussions on how the organisation will integrate capacity building priorities with those of policy analysis and advice, to develop a comprehensive portfolio of assistance.

8. The Plan has two ongoing and interlinked Goals for the Secretariat reflecting the Commonwealth's emphasis on the promotion of democracy and development:

**Goal 1:** To support member countries to prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democratic practices and the rule of law, and achieve greater respect for human rights.

**Goal 2:** To support pro-poor policies for economic growth and sustainable development in member countries.

These two goals establish the framework for the two broad pillars – Democracy and Development – under which the Programme is structured.

**Goal 1 Peace and Democracy** will be achieved through **4** Programmes:

*Democracy Pillar – promoting Commonwealth fundamental political values*

- 1: Good Offices for Peace
- 2: Democracy and Consensus-Building
- 3: Rule of Law
- 4: Human Rights

**Goal 2 Pro-Poor Growth and Sustainable Development** will be achieved through **4** Programmes:

*Development Pillar – developing national capacity of member countries*

- 5: Public Sector Development
- 6: Economic Development
- 7: Environmentally Sustainable Development
- 8: Human Development

9. The new, more compact and refocused programme structure reflects, and is designed to support and deliver, the major priorities and mandates guiding our work for the next Plan period, including in particular those deriving from CHOGM.

10. Each of the eight Programmes has a Programme Statement (see Annex 1). Each Statement specifies the Programme objective, results, and indicators that guide the form and content of the portfolio and which will be used to measure the performance and progress towards the Plans Goals.

11. The Plan establishes for the first time a package of corporate management and business functions that support the Programmes and will ensure the Secretariat operates in an efficient and effective manner.

12. The Secretariat began the shift to a stronger focus on outcomes and measuring results in the last Strategic Plan (2004/05-2007/08). This Plan (2008/09-2011/12) establishes more firmly the principles and operational framework essential for implementing results-based management.

13. The Plan outlines the international standards and principles which will inform and guide the design and delivery of our work.

14. The Plan will be funded by the assessed budget of the Secretariat (ComSec), the assessed budget of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) as well as voluntary contributions to the CYP, and voluntary contributions to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC). The revised scale of assessed contributions for ComSec, and the new scale of assessed contributions to the CYP, will take effect from the start of the Plan period.

15. The resources of the CFTC will be used across all eight Programme areas. The Plan treats 'capacity building and institutional development' as a mode of delivery rather than as a Programme of work (as in the last Plan). The closer integration of the Secretariat's capacity building activities with its policy formulation and advisory services will improve coherence and sustainability.

16. CYP resources will be dedicated to meeting the CYP Plan objectives within Programme 8: Human Development. It is assumed that the Secretariat and CYP assessed budgets will increase in line with inflation (zero growth in real terms) and that the CFTC receipts will increase by 6% per annum in real terms for five years, in line with the undertakings of Commonwealth leaders at the 2005 CHOGM.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2008/09-2011/12

### 1. MISSION STATEMENT

1. The Commonwealth Secretariat is the primary intergovernmental organisation within the Commonwealth and it continues to serve the purposes for which it was originally established in 1965. Deriving its mandates from Heads of Governments, the Secretariat serves the needs of the Commonwealth's member governments and their peoples in political, economic and social development, using the combined resources of assessed contributions to the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec), assessed and voluntary contributions to the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) and voluntary contributions to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC). The Secretariat also provides a forum for deliberation, collective solution-seeking, consensus decision-making, and action on matters of importance to the association.

2. The Secretariat's overarching role is articulated in the following Mission Statement:

“We work as a trusted partner for all Commonwealth people as:

- a force for peace, democracy, equality, equity, respect and good governance;
- a catalyst for global consensus-building; and
- a source of assistance for sustainable development and poverty eradication”.

### 2. VALUES AND VISION

3. The Commonwealth Secretariat will continue its efforts to uphold the fundamental values of the Commonwealth. These are:

- Democratic processes and institutions that take into account national circumstances, strengthening the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, and just and honest government.
- Development that rests on the foundations of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, gender equity, and peace and security.
- Fundamental human rights, including equal rights and opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, colour, gender, age, creed or political belief.
- Empowerment and effective participation of young people in the development process and for social transformation.
- Sustainable development and a more equitable international society free of poverty, ignorance and disease.
- Building respect, tolerance and understanding of diversity amongst and within distinct societies, cultures and communities.

4. There are other international standards and principles that inform the work of the Secretariat. These include the MDG framework which provides a sound and comprehensive set of targets and indicators and the Secretariat will adopt a youth perspective in its work which contributes to these Goals. Although some MDGs have been achieved by some

member countries, many Commonwealth countries are falling behind the MDG targets now beyond the half-way point to the 2015 end year. Whilst the Secretariat's technical assistance will continue to be demand driven, it will increase its efforts to reach out to affected members in support of their own efforts to meet the MDGs. As one of several actors working within this framework, the Secretariat will work strategically to contribute to the overall achievement of the MDGs. The principles of the Paris Declaration suggest an approach to our work which we will endeavour to follow where practicable.<sup>1</sup> The Secretariat has also made a commitment to adopting a rights-based approach to development. Social equity principles and principles of sustainable development will also be applied across the portfolio.

5. There is also now an alignment of strategic planning cycles between the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) and the Commonwealth Foundation; all are now operating on the same four-year cycle.

### **3. CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES - THE CONTEXT**

6. The two mutually supportive goals of the Commonwealth Secretariat are informed by the search for a better quality of life, for improving net human worth whilst also seeking to ensure equality and equity for both men and women and for young people. The environment is constantly evolving. The Secretariat must be able to respond to global developments and the shifting priorities and challenges facing its member states, and thus the Plan will need to retain a degree of flexibility and adaptability.

#### **3.1 Challenges of Democracy and Governance**

7. In a world of continuing conflict and governance challenges, the Commonwealth's good offices work to address conflict and support peace-building in member nations, its activities to extend and mainstream human rights, and its support to extending the rule of law and building democratic institutions will continue to be priority areas for the Secretariat. The Commonwealth has made real progress in recent years expanding the democratic space and deepening good governance in member states. This work is much valued by member states and will need to continue to be an important focus in the period ahead. Not only is this activity central to the Commonwealth's own vision and fundamental values, as set out by successive meetings of CHOGM and CMAG, but improvements in governance and the institutions supporting it are essential to delivering the promise of the MDGs.

#### **3.2 Countries in transition**

8. The Commonwealth's membership is characterised by considerable differences and variety in terms of their stages of development and levels of capacity; not can this 'lumpiness' any longer be accurately characterised on the conventional but simplistic 'North-South' axis. The Commonwealth has great potential to play a facilitating role in enabling those countries that are lagging behind to mobilise their hibernating capabilities, and even to leapfrog forward in the transformation process. This can be supported through existing methods of technical assistance, but also through creative exploitation of the potential of

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<sup>1</sup> The Secretariat has committed to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. As evidence by the Programme Statements, the Secretariat is cognizant of the value of these principles and standards of programme quality for achieving its development outcomes. The Secretariat's approach to delivering technical support will be to seek to identify those areas of the Paris Declaration where it can add value and which inform its performance framework.

technologies – which, like the internet or mobile telephony - may originally have been developed to serve sectors of developed-country markets at macro level, but can transform poorer economies and societies, at more localised levels and even more dramatically.

### **3.3 Diversity**

9. This is a strengthened mandate for the Commonwealth Secretariat, which can make a unique contribution. The Commonwealth is well-placed to affirm the fundamental truth that diversity is one of humanity's greatest strengths. Indeed, accepting diversity, respecting the dignity of all human beings, and understanding the richness of our multiple identities have always been fundamental to the Commonwealth's principles and approach, and contributes to resisting the cultivation of a culture of violence. The Secretariat will focus on four areas: young people, gender, media and education. It will build on existing Secretariat work such as the report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding ("Civil Paths to Peace"), and facilitate the sharing of best practices and experiences of Commonwealth members.

### **3.4 Climate Change**

10. Climate change represents a significant threat to human security and economic development and is exacerbating the challenge of meeting the MDGs. It poses a threat to low-lying coastal regions and to the very survival of some Commonwealth countries, especially small island states. The proposed thrust of the Secretariat's work in this area is encapsulated in the Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan, agreed by Commonwealth Heads of Government in Uganda in November 2007. Heads of Government resolved to pursue action in six areas, focussing on: climate negotiations; the human and economic aspects of climate change (drawing on networks of professional associations and other resources); and improved land use management and sustainable use of forest resources. The Secretariat will also focus on the challenges in the sustainable management of natural resources and agriculture, and support countries in managing risks from natural disasters and the challenges of rapid urbanisation.

### **3.5 Strengths and Challenges of the World Economic Situation**

#### **3.5.1 International Trade**

11. The inconclusiveness of the Doha Round of World Trade Organisation negotiations, has led to considerable uncertainty, particularly in global trade in agricultural and industrial products. A direct consequence of this is the increasing number of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) between countries in the same region, and between regions. An ambitious outcome to the WTO Doha Round - one that delivers worthwhile outcomes for developing states on agriculture, industrial products and services - would bring more certainty to the world economy, and by boosting global incomes, would therefore assist in addressing poverty in the longer term. The Secretariat will also deliver on the mandate from Heads to promote and strengthen intra-Commonwealth trade and economic linkages.

#### **3.5.2 Small States**

12. Whilst the continued global expansion of output and the improved growth performance of some developing countries in recent years is welcomed, a significant number of developing countries, including many small states, have not been part of this trend. Some small states continue to be marginalised in the global economy, and in addition to their remoteness and insularity, they are susceptible to natural disasters, and have limited

institutional capacity or ability to diversify. These countries face significant challenges: erosion of preferences for traditional exports, and the related pressing need to diversify into new economic activities; a rapid rise in the debt burden for many small states; increased environmental vulnerability; rising levels of youth unemployment, security and crime; and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. There is also a growing recognition of the complex relationship among environmental factors, poverty and economic growth.

13. In this context, the Secretariat will continue to champion the concerns of small developing states and the participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting will continue to be a priority for the Secretariat.

### **3.5.3 Debt**

14. Debt can be sustainable in the long term, only if the costs of servicing the debt are low enough that sufficient resources can be applied to achieving key development targets enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals, such as poverty reduction, good governance and economic development. The unsustainable debt of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries has exceeded such levels and severely inhibited their growth. At the same time, many developing countries have faced financial crises in the last two decades due to vulnerabilities in their debt structure. Prudent debt management is therefore a major cornerstone in economic policy for ensuring sustainable growth and development. Responding to the growing demand to assist countries to monitor their public and private sector debt,<sup>2</sup> and advocacy and consensus building will be required to foster sustainable borrowing/lending in the future.

### **3.5.4 Investment and finance for growth and development**

15. The Secretariat will have an increased focus on developing domestic financial markets and in supporting opportunities for domestic investors. The use of incentives to promote investment in LDCs, small states and other developing countries will be supported. Improving access to financial services for the poor and vulnerable is an essential element in the fight against poverty.

## **4. LESSONS LEARNED**

16. During the Plan period 2008/09 – 2011/12, the Commonwealth Secretariat will enhance its ability to be an effective ‘learning organisation’. Lessons drawn from the numerous reviews and evaluations conducted during the last Plan period (2004/05-2007/08) have helped inform the development of this Plan.

Reviews of the portfolio from the recent past that inform this Plan include:

- Strategic Plan Review
- Semi-annual Progress Reports
- Annual Performance Reports.

Reviews of programmes and programme elements include:

- CFTC Review
- Strategy towards Results-Based Management (RBM)
- Annual Divisional Workplans
- Evaluation studies

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst most Commonwealth HIPC countries are eligible for multilateral debt relief, in practice flows of resources have to date been modest.

- Audits (eg. Gender, project management)
- Feedback from member states.

Examinations of operational and management issues include:

- An assessment of the Principal Contacts Points/Points of Contact system
- Re-prioritisation of mandates, evolution of work programmes, sun-setting
- Prioritisation of member countries' requests
- Revisions of project appraisal and design procedures
- Trends in extra budgetary resources (EBR).

17. Six key lessons emerging from these studies are set out in the paragraphs below. Some of the lessons – whether they are areas for improvement or areas to strengthen further – have already been addressed; others will be addressed over time and will therefore constitute part of the organisation's work programme.

18. Reviews of CFTC programmes and feedback from member governments show that, broadly speaking, the Secretariat's strategic focus accurately reflects the priorities of its member states; the Secretariat will therefore continue work in existing areas, subject to some adjustments as the international landscape evolves. The CFTC review shows that the timely and responsive nature of our delivery of assistance is also much valued by member states.

19. Member governments have requested that the Secretariat revisit the breadth of its work and, in this Plan, focus more specifically on areas in which the Secretariat has a comparative advantage or can add value. The Plan responds to this in the Programme structure. Whereas the last Strategic Plan (2004/05 – 2007/08) had sixteen programmes, this Plan has eight. This has been achieved in a number of ways: the more tightly re-focusing areas of work; a more rigorous approach to identifying and developing efficient forms of delivery; and closing out areas of work which have completed and served their purpose; which no longer constitute a niche area for the Commonwealth; where there are dwindling economies of scale; or for which it is not cost-effective to maintain specialist technical expertise.

20. **Prioritisation of mandates.** Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) are the highest level forum from which the Secretariat takes its mandates, but Ministerial Meetings also issue new challenges and requests. The Secretariat is tasked therefore with prioritising and re-prioritising mandates. In doing so, there are two important points to consider. Firstly, relative to new mandates, some things decrease in importance in Commonwealth terms, if not for individual Commonwealth countries. Secondly, every CHOGM and Ministerial Meeting issues new mandates but no additional resources. The Secretariat will enter into more robust and realistic dialogue with governments before and during Ministerial Meetings, in order that it can ensure the number and breadth of new mandates has a strategic fit with the Plan and the Secretariat's ability to implement them.

21. **Prioritisation of requests.** The Secretariat will strengthen procedures for effectively prioritising country requests according to need. It will also be pro-active in assisting members with urgent needs to submit applications for assistance.

22. **'Demand driven' assistance.** The ability of the Secretariat to deliver is sometimes vulnerable to unforeseen events in ways characterised by uncertainty. In some types of work, such as consensus-building or peace-building, the pace of work is often highly unpredictable. The Secretariat will continue to keep a close eye on emerging possibilities that could be translated quickly into projects when favourable circumstances unfold and other planned activities slow down.

23. **Planning, appraisal, monitoring, and evaluation.** A more robust approach to monitoring outputs and assessing the effectiveness of our work will inform this process with a more results and evidence-based (including recipient-feedback) analysis. The new information system will enable the Secretariat better to monitor and analyse the projects within each Programme by country and thematic cluster.

24. **Strategic partnerships at a regional level.** The Secretariat will develop a coherent and consistent approach to strategic partnerships, and will where appropriate formalise these partnerships through measures such as joint management initiatives and co-operation frameworks. Collaboration with other institutions is vitally important for attracting support for Commonwealth values. Partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of the Secretariat's efforts, reduce duplication, and provide countries with the best expertise available. Experience has shown that high level political relationships with other international and intergovernmental organisations are fundamental to success and regional partnerships can be an effective mode for sustainable capacity building. Different regions will require a different approach and the Secretariat will work closely with local partners to ensure regional circumstances are taken fully into account.

25. **Assessment of Primary Contact Point (PCP) and Points of Contact (POC) system.** The Secretariat will review the PCP/POC relationships to enhance coordination, including giving better access to information for government representatives.

## **5. COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE**

26. The Commonwealth has a number of comparative advantages which it brings to its work.

27. The Commonwealth fundamental values are at the core of everything that the Commonwealth Secretariat does. This 'common language' of values, combined with mechanisms to assist in upholding them, such as the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), forms the basis of the Commonwealth's reputation as a body that is relevant and has political legitimacy.

28. The Secretariat also has a track record of brokering policy and negotiating positions among its members – collective solutions arrived at by consensus – on sensitive and important political and economic issues that can then be taken forward by the Commonwealth as a whole in other fora.

29. Technical assistance helps build and nurture institutions. The Secretariat is reputed for providing cost efficient technical assistance and for fulfilling the role as an "honest broker", particularly in policy analysis and advice.

30. As noted earlier, the 'demand driven' approach to providing technical assistance provides certain challenges. However, in responding to requests for assistance, the Secretariat exercises a judicious balance of focus and flexibility. Its ability to be responsive to requests from governments on an as-needed basis, to link global issues and strategies to local concerns and to provide timely delivery, adds up to a 'style' that is a comparative advantage in itself. The Plan sets out how planning techniques will be further developed to better facilitate this way of working.

31. The similarity of education, legal, and administrative systems in member countries facilitates exchange of best practice. So too does having English as a common language –

indeed, it greatly facilitates intra-Commonwealth communication and enhances consensus building and policy development.

32. The networks of Commonwealth civil society associations generate community participation and accountability.

33. The Secretariat has a track record of advocating on behalf of small states. There are thirty two in the Commonwealth, most with a population of fewer than 1.5 million. The Secretariat attaches high priority to supporting their integration in the global economy, assisting to build their resilience and competitiveness, and to take advantage of the opportunities, and meeting the challenges arising from globalisation.

## **5.1 Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC)**

34. The CFTC Review has confirmed the unique niche role that the CFTC plays in terms of its size and philosophy and that it remains a relevant instrument to achieve the aims set out in its mandate. The strengths of the CFTC identified by the Review –an ability to deliver a high quality programme of benefit to member states, having a comparative advantage in being receptive to and relevant for Commonwealth countries, particularly small and vulnerable economies, a capacity to provide expertise to meet specific technical needs and to respond to small scale development challenges in a flexible and timely manner – will continue to guide the focus and strategic direction of the Programme. Many members consider the size and flexibility of the CFTC as a positive strength which has enabled the Secretariat to be responsive to local needs and operate with a non-directive stance: flexibility and responsiveness are therefore important operational criteria in the new Plan. The Secretariat has acknowledged the need for a review of some procedural and implementation issues in order to bring the management of the CFTC in line with international best practice and to improve the design and monitoring of CFTC projects, especially in reporting achievements and outcomes. The focus in the new Plan will be on implementing new management guidelines which will embed upgraded quality assurance processes and enhance the ability of the Secretariat to provide comprehensive, results oriented reports to the governing bodies.

35. Evaluation studies and direct feedback from member governments have also shown that governments place value on the impartial and confidential basis on which advice is given. The interactive hands-on style of working with government officials is conducive to relevant and practical advice. Governments have also said that they benefit from the “honest broker” role which the Secretariat provides through its understanding of the respective interests and concerns of governments. Governments have appreciated being able to access the Secretariat’s institutional memory, and its international knowledge-base developed by advising numerous Commonwealth countries and negotiating with multilateral organisations. The Secretariat is able to target its response to governments by focusing in niche areas requiring specialist knowledge. Overall, the Secretariat is in a position in which it can supply advice and assistance that is either not available from other sources or only available at considerable cost.

## **5.2 Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)**

36. The Commonwealth Youth Programme is the largest youth programme in the world with a decentralised structure. It works directly with member governments and young people<sup>3</sup> on a range of development issues. In recent years it has struggled financially, but in line with

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<sup>3</sup> Defined by the CYP as 15-29 years of age.

the decision of Commonwealth leaders at the 2007 CHOGM, an assessed scale of contributions for the CYP will take effect at the same time as this Plan.

37. One of the strengths of CYP is its ability to tailor its programmes at region specific needs based on extensive consultations with young people and other stakeholders. The programme delivery period of CYP is shorter than those of other agencies working in youth development and CYP is often able to create greater leverage and impact with its comparatively smaller financial resources.

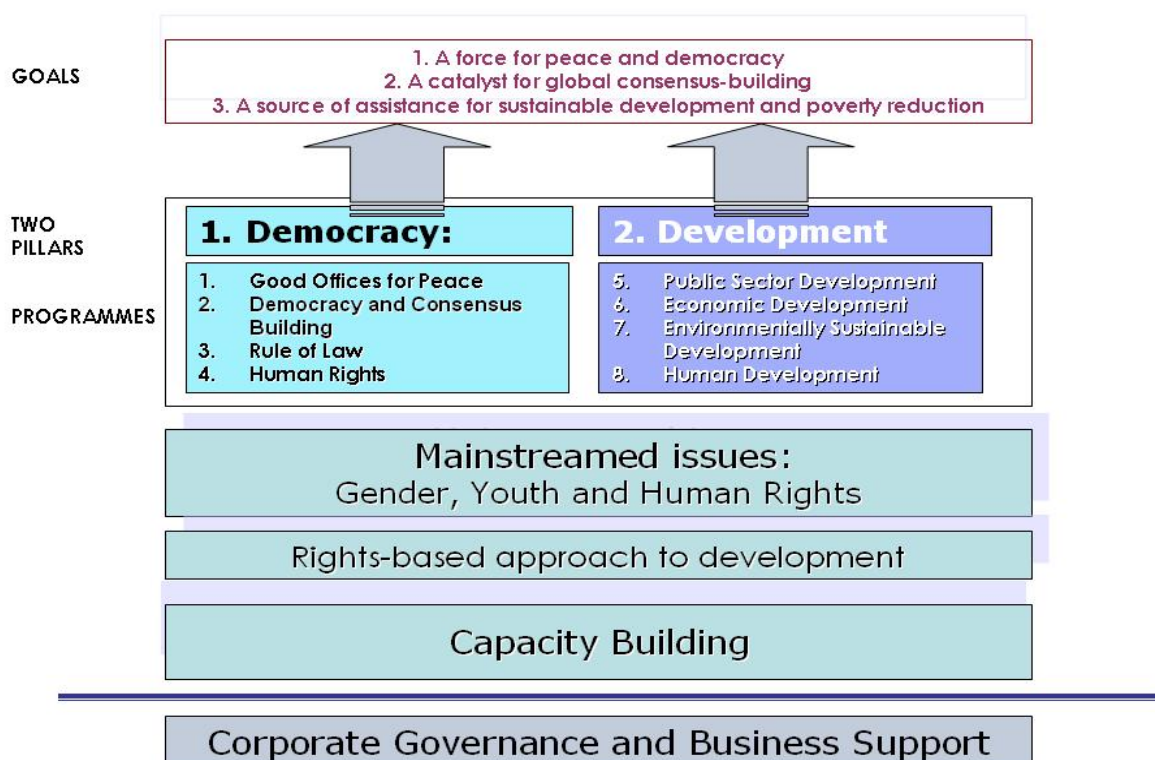
38. Since its inception, the CYP has become a credible, cutting-edge and effective youth development programme with comparative advantage over organisations doing similar work. CYP is the only development programme with a specific focus on youth and which works through a systematic and decentralised youth governance structure. With this focus, CYP has pioneered a framework for youth empowerment, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment. The CYP is also able to draw from the wider resource base of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the knowledge and expertise of an extensive and diverse network of Commonwealth professional associations, civil society organisations, experts and eminent Commonwealth citizens.

39. CYP resources will be enhanced by the shift to a budgetary system of assessed contributions, as agreed at the Kampala CHOGM in 2007.

## 6. PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

40. The proposed Programme framework is illustrated in **Chart 1** below.

**Chart 1: Programme framework**



## 7. WAYS OF WORKING

41. **Approaches to mainstreaming.** During the Plan period the Secretariat will move towards adopting a rights-based approach to development, whilst ensuring that gender, youth and human rights are mainstreamed in all policy formulation and planning processes and programme implementation. Redressing social inequality is at the heart of the Secretariat's development work, thus these three areas (gender, youth and human rights) will be mainstreamed across all Programmatic work and support functions.

42. The rights-based approach to development is a conceptual framework that guides approaches and interventions for development, normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. The starting point for the Secretariat is the UNHCHR approach, which notes that, essentially, a rights-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development.

43. The human rights norms and standards are those contained in the wealth of international treaties, declarations and interpretive commentary. Key principles include equality and equity, accountability, empowerment and participation. A rights-based approach to development includes the following elements:

- express linkage to rights
- accountability
- empowerment
- participation
- non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable or marginalised groups

44. In the first two years of the Plan period, the Secretariat will develop further the application of these principles across the portfolio. This will be achieved through an exploration and articulation of the ways in which rights-based approaches to development applies to each of the Programmes, and how it should be used to support member countries address poverty and social inequality concerns. The mid-term review of the Plan will be an opportunity for the organisation to report on progress and shape the RBD work thereafter.

45. Mainstreaming human rights refers to the concept of enhancing the human rights programme and integrating rights concerns into the full range of Secretariat activities. This is complementary to the work on rights-based approaches to development.

46. Gender, young people and human rights are fundamental 'lenses' through which development processes and political, economic and social inequality can be viewed. All political and development initiatives and activities must be inclusive and participatory and take cognisance of the specific and differentiated needs, interests and rights of women, young people and other disadvantaged or marginalised groups.

47. Socio-economic development, democracy and peace are inextricably linked to gender equality. Achieving gender equality is one of the stated fundamental values of the Commonwealth. It is viewed not only as an intrinsic goal and an issue of social justice, but also as a key factor in enhancing the achievement of the Secretariat's goals. Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. Gender equity goes further than equality of opportunity, to look at outcomes, since

treating women and men, girls and boys, equally does not automatically ensure that they obtain equal outcomes and benefits.

48. The definition and principles of gender mainstreaming are universally recognized and they are already employed by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Plan of Action for Gender Equality (PoA). The definition is as follows:

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality."<sup>4</sup>

49. The Secretariat will realise its commitment to gender mainstreaming through a number of measures including the development and implementation of a Secretariat Gender Policy, introducing and strengthening gender guidelines, assessment criteria and procedures for mainstreaming gender in policy formulation, planning and project design and implementation. Mandatory gender training will be given to all staff.

50. More than sixty per cent of the Commonwealth's population is aged under thirty years. The proportion is closer to three-quarters in some countries. These men and women are the largest cohort ever to enter the transition into adulthood. Young people represent a disadvantaged social group: in the Commonwealth, 209m young people live on less than US\$1 a day, 130m are illiterate, 40m are out of secondary education and 90m unemployed<sup>5</sup>. There are therefore social as well as demographic imperatives for mainstreaming youth.

51. The youth cohort which is peaking between now and 2015 is the largest in history. Young people, who may be marginalised and disempowered, need to be seen as active agents of and participants in positive development initiatives, integral to the process of finding solutions, rather than passive targets or beneficiaries. Mainstreaming them in this sense and investing in them is an investment in economic development and social stability.

52. Based on the principles of gender mainstreaming at para. 49 above, the Secretariat is using the following definition for youth mainstreaming:

Mainstreaming a *youth* perspective is the process of assessing the implications *for youth* of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making *youth* concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in all political, economic, and social spheres so that *youth* benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

53. The Secretariat will develop an integrated approach to mainstreaming young people. The mainstreaming of gender, young people and human rights throughout Secretariat

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<sup>4</sup> 1997 ECOSOC definition, available *Report of the Economic and Social Council for the Year 1997*, U.N. GAOR, 52nd Sess., Supp. No. 3, at 24, U.N. Doc. A/52/3/Rev.1 (1997).

<sup>5</sup> UN World Youth Report 2005.

programmes and functions will be monitored through a number of mechanisms, including, for youth, the Youth Development Index (YDI).

54. The 1997 ECOSOC basic principles of gender mainstreaming, which will also guide the mainstreaming of young people and human rights, include the following:

- Responsibility for implementing the mainstreaming strategy is system-wide, and rests at the highest levels within agencies
- Adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress need to be established
- The initial identification of issues and problems across all area(s) of activity should be such that differences and disparities based on gender, youth and rights considerations can be diagnosed
- Assumptions that issues or problems are neutral from a gender, youth or rights perspective should never be made
- Gender analysis should always be carried out
- Clear political will and allocation of adequate resources for mainstreaming including additional financial and human resources are important for translation of the concept into practice
- Gender, youth, and rights mainstreaming requires that efforts be made to broaden women's and young people's equitable participation at all levels of decision-making
- Mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, specific policies and programmes, and positive legislation; nor does it do away with the need for gender, youth or rights units or focal points.

55. **Modes of delivery.** The Secretariat delivers its core programmes of work in three main ways: policy development, technical assistance and advisory services. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) and Ministerial Meetings are fora in which Commonwealth members can collectively seek solutions and develop policy on issues of global importance. Research and analytical work supports these activities.

56. Approaches used to build capacity include:

- Operational support for critical government functions: focussing on overall capacity of systems
- Advice on specialised services: resolving specific problems; 'one-of-a-kind' interventions, not necessarily designed to build capacity
- Promoting change or reforms: changing approaches or attitudes on key issues; enhancing capabilities of a group or an organisation
- Political advice: resolving specific issues to build capacity
- Advice on global positioning: advice to meet international standards or address global problems; building overall system capacity
- Training for learning and development: training to enhance skills/competencies of individuals, groups or organisations; within larger programme of developing capacity
- By the CFTC in particular: training programmes, workshops and seminars; and the placement of experts.

57. There are a number of other priority issues that the Secretariat will address to improve the quality and effectiveness of the Programmes. Project design and monitoring guidelines will establish the framework and criteria for taking these issues on board. Projects carried out in small and 'micro' states, will continue to be sensitive to the inherent vulnerabilities and limitations of these countries, and will also factor in the concerns and reach of civil society.

Sustainability of the project benefits will remain an important quality criterion. The impact of HIV/AIDS and migration of skilled workers are often factors to be addressed in design and during implementation. Effective consideration of these issues will enhance the relevance and impact of the Secretariat's work. The application of results based management will also strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to report its performance on issues that will be mainstreamed. The Secretariat will also improve its reporting on the volume, nature and impact of the Secretariat's work in small states.

## **8. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS, AND DIALOGUE**

58. The Secretariat was mandated by the Coolum Declaration 2002 and the Kampala Communiqué 2007 to strengthen its strategic relationships outside the Commonwealth, based on the principle of mutual advantage. The primary purpose of such strategic relationships lies in the exercise of influence; the creation of networks for the development of consensus on the major issues facing the international community such as climate change; and the opening of possibilities to enhance the Commonwealth's resource base. Expanding the Commonwealth presence and reach is an important aim of such partnerships. These partnerships recognise that many Commonwealth countries are members of other multi-lateral and regional organisations and may have dual obligations. However, this can provide an opportunity for the Secretariat to establish and strengthen its relationships within those multi-lateral and regional organisations. The Secretariat will seek to utilise partnerships at both strategic and operational levels.

59. A good example of a strategic relationship is the "Hub and Spokes" Project: Building the Capacity of ACP Countries in Trade Policy Formulation, Negotiations and Implementation" – a joint initiative concluded by the European Commission (EC), the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) and La Francophonie, with the support of the ACP Secretariat.<sup>6</sup>

60. Strategic relationships can include Commonwealth intergovernmental organisations, civil society partners, the private sector, governments, regional and multilateral and development finance institutions. The benefits of such partnerships include: enhanced coordination, promoting coherent and structured interventions, better alignment and rationalisation of interventions and leveraging resources and sharing knowledge and best practice. Relationships have to be carefully selected: some relationships which would yield significant extra budgetary resources for the Secretariat, might nevertheless entail additional reporting, servicing or logistical burdens.

61. **Civil Society:** In order to implement the Strategic Plan the Secretariat will continue to build its existing strategic partnerships with civil society, and the private sector.<sup>7</sup> New links will be established with a wide variety of others, based on the principle of mutual advantage. Engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society, expands the reach and impact of our strategies beyond the limitations of the Secretariat's financial resources.

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<sup>6</sup> Examples of relationships strengthened or initiated since the Coolum CHOGM include those with the World Bank, European Union, Caricom, the Pacific Forum Secretariat the ACP Secretariat, the East African Community, the African regional integration organisations such as SADC, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Secretariat, and la Francophonie. Other relationships under consideration or development include those with the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, ASEAN, the Indian Ocean Commission, the Iberian/Latin American Secretariat, and the Organisation of American States (OAS).

<sup>7</sup> Including trade unions, professional associations, research institutions and think tanks, cultural and faith based groups, Parliamentarians and the private sector.

62. At the operational level there has been successful engagement with civil society, including joint initiatives to promote engagement at specific Ministerial meetings, and collaboration with civil society organisations (CSOs) in the design and implementation of projects. The Secretariat will strengthen its partnerships with the Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning. Regular consultations with both organisations will facilitate co-ordination and minimise duplication of effort. In consultation with the Commonwealth Foundation, the Secretariat will give greater emphasis to developing partnerships with both pan-Commonwealth CSOs and with other relevant CSOs to enhance the reach of its programmes.

63. The Secretariat will also examine the scope for greater engagement with suitable and responsible private sector partner organisations, e.g. the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, where there are complementarities of objectives and ways of working.

## **9. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT FUNCTIONS**

64. Significant improvements were made in governance and management processes over the last Plan period. Priorities for the Secretariat in this Plan will be twofold: to continue implementing a broad range of reforms to bring the organisation in line with international practice and in compliance with changing standards of public sector management; and to enhance the operating environment for staff through a more participatory and inclusive approach to management and staff development and learning.

65. The Plan establishes for the first time a comprehensive package of corporate management and business strategies that will support the achievement of organisational goals and performance standards. These strategies will be operationalised through service level agreements.

### **9.1. Human Resources Development**

66. The core principles underpinning the Human Resources Strategy derive from the Secretariat's mission statement and from Commonwealth values. These are:

- The Secretariat can only deliver on its commitments through the combined efforts of all staff
- The Secretariat will recruit staff of the highest calibre to meet its commitment to provide outstanding policy development, technical assistance and advisory services to Commonwealth member states
- The Secretariat values its entire staff for their knowledge, skills, talents, flexibility, commitment, creativity, and productiveness and undertakes to treat its staff with fairness, respect and dignity at all times.

67. The Human Resources Strategy sets out the performance standards for the human resources management incorporating best practice standards. Compliance with these standards will be monitored through feedback from Divisions, from the Commonwealth Secretariat Staff Association, and by oversight of the relevant internal Committees.

### **9.2. Financial management**

68. In 2004/05, the Secretariat embarked on a finance improvement program. It focused on developing and maintaining a sound financial management system, and included the restructuring of the finance function, clearing backlogs, streamlining the accounting processes and implementing international accounting standards.

69. There are two priorities for the Secretariat for financial management during this Plan:

- Completing the reforms to financial and accounting systems to meet international standards and to strengthen fiduciary performance
- Improving financial procedures in a way that supports and enhances the responsiveness of the organisation in the delivery of its work.

### **9.3. Governance and management**

70. The structure of the governing bodies and their meetings has been streamlined, and documentation rationalized. The timeline for deliberations and the transparency of reporting have improved. The findings of the Internal Audit on Corporate Governance will also be addressed in this Plan period. None of the seven recommendations made by the audit were regarded as having “high significance”; nonetheless, efforts to implement these recommendations will continue during the Plan period.

71. The Secretariat provides an effective mechanism for ensuring a high-calibre contribution of civil society to the Commonwealth’s policy development processes. The semi-annual civil society organisations (CSO) consultations are now embedded and strategic partnerships have been greatly strengthened through this process. The Commonwealth Youth Programme’s (CYP) strategic planning cycle is now aligned with that of the Secretariat, which will lead to better synergies and co-ordination. Similarly, the Commonwealth Foundation (CF) strategic planning cycle is also aligned with that of the Secretariat which will allow scope for more active and collaborative planning over the coming years.

### **9.4. Managing for Outcomes**

72. In the last Plan period the Secretariat revised the programme and project planning and management procedures, and developed systems that would support the use of results-based management (RBM). Together these improvements will reinforce the principles of managing for outcomes rather than on inputs. The shift to a stronger focus on outcomes and measuring results will continue during this Plan.

73. A number of the building blocks for these changes are now in place:

- The structure of the Plan illustrates the logical links from the Goals to the Programme objective and the associated results
- The structure of the Plan and its Programmes will encourage the design of more coherent packages of work across different sectors and operational units within the Secretariat
- Procedures for project design, monitoring and quality assessment have been revised to incorporate RBM principles
- The management information system has been redesigned to facilitate accountability, transparency and collaboration across the portfolio and to support improved monitoring and performance reporting.

74. There remains, however, the challenge of bringing into effect other reforms to support an integrated approach to portfolio management. These relate to systems and procedures, to staff training and skills enhancement, and to maintaining institutional knowledge in a rotation based organisation. Emphasis during this Plan period will be on completing the reforms to procedures and information management systems and, through operational practices and training, embedding RBM principles and standards into staff daily approach to work.

75. The implementation of RBM will be regularly monitored, and progress reported, within the performance reporting framework.

i. To Governing Bodies

- The mid-year monitoring report – the six-monthly Progress Report
- The Annual Performance Report
- The Mid-Plan Review
- The Secretary-General's Report to CHOGM

ii . To Secretariat Management:

- Regular monitoring reviews of programme implementation and performance
- Regular progress reviews by divisions on portfolio implementation and management
- Annual Division Workplans
- Monthly reviews of project implementation and financial management
- Project Completion Reports and
- Periodic evaluations of programmes and thematic areas of the portfolio.

76. At the 2007 CHOGM, Heads of Government recognised the need to reach agreement on a revised Scale of Assessed Contributions to the Commonwealth Secretariat and a new Scale of Assessed Contributions to the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). The CYP would receive additional voluntary contributions also. Negotiations on both scales are ongoing with a view to implementing the commitment of Heads of Government to give effect to both new Scales of Assessed Contributions from the start of the Plan period.

77. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) will continue to be funded by voluntary contributions. A priority for the organisation in this area will be to ensure that governments implement their undertakings of a 6% per annum increase in real terms for five years as agreed by Heads of Government at the Malta CHOGM in 2005.

78. Strategic partnerships have the potential to mobilize additional financial resources, although the Secretariat's capacity to deliver and the balance of work between the Secretariat and its partners will need to be addressed in such partnerships.

79. A strategy for raising and managing Extra-Budgetary Resources (EBR) is under development. Depending on the source of funds, EBR has different conditions and reporting requirements. The guidelines will address criteria and principles for the management of EBR raised from corporate sponsorship, in support of the Secretariat's commitment to engage with responsible private sector actors.

## **9.5. Communications strategy**

80. The Secretariat's Communication Strategy will ensure that the organisation understands the needs, interests and behaviour of its member states, so that the Secretariat can better inform members of its comparative advantage and build awareness of its programmes. The communication strategy will also ensure that the right communication methods and

media are employed to inform the audience. The communications strategy will address the two-way flow of information between the Secretariat and its member states and set out how a multi-media approach can contribute to innovative programming and project delivery. The strategy will re-define the Secretariat's 'audience' so that it is more inclusive, will initiate more fora outside of the UK to promote the organisation's work and will guide the development of youth media outlets.

81. The Secretariat's IT policy establishes the framework within which the Secretariat manages and implements IT standards. Greater focus will be given to sharing data, networking, and upgrading information systems to support staff in the delivery of their work and to promote learning and development. The IT strategy will also be linked to the Green Strategy. Existing IT initiatives to reduce the Secretariat's carbon footprint will be built upon.

## **9.6. Environmental strategy**

82. In accordance with international best practice, the Secretariat will develop an 'environmental strategy' to underpin its commitment to environmentally sustainable development both in its programmatic work and in the Secretariat's business support functions. The purpose of the environmental strategy is to strengthen the consideration of environmental aspects of programme work and reduce the organisation's "carbon footprint".<sup>8</sup> The environmental strategy will bring together and strengthen a number of existing initiatives in these areas.

83. With respect to programmatic work, the environmental strategy will strengthen organisational guidelines and procedures for examining the potential environmental impacts of projects and programmes, and adjusting project design to capture synergies and support environmentally sustainable development.

84. With respect to the Secretariat's business support functions, the Green Strategy will develop clear policy guidelines on aspects such as procurement, recycling, paper use, and travel/transportation, to addressing the organisation's overall environmental footprint.

85. The Secretariat will adopt an evaluation framework by setting a baseline and monitoring progress in each of these areas. The framework will also set progressive targets for improvement and help the Commonwealth Secretariat to learn lessons from implementation.

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<sup>8</sup> The impact that the organisation has in terms of environmental resources and functions, including the amount of greenhouse gases it produces.

### Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan 2008/09-2011/12 Programme Statements

#### Introduction

The Secretariat remains 'at the service of all Commonwealth governments'. The activities of the Secretariat have expanded in response to global changes, international reforms and shifts in the concerns and priorities of members, particularly small and vulnerable economies. However, the primary duties of the Secretariat remain focused on:

- Facilitating and promoting consultation and exchanges among member countries;
- Preparing and disseminating information on issues of concern;
- Assisting and advancing the development of member countries;
- Acting as a focal point for specialized Commonwealth institutions;
- Organizing and servicing intergovernmental meetings.

To meet this mandate it is proposed there will be 8 programmes within the Secretariat, of which 4 are designed to deliver the two long term goals of Peace and Democracy and 4 to support the goal of Pro-Poor Growth and Sustainable Development.

Gender equality, youth participation and rights-based approaches to development will be mainstreamed across the whole portfolio and in all Programmes.

#### Introduction to Goal 1 Peace and Democracy

*To support member countries to prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democratic practices and the rule of law, and achieve greater respect for human rights and gender equality.*

#### Global Context

The democratic agenda for the Commonwealth is underpinned by six democratic themes: building a healthy democratic culture; ensuring a constructive relationship between the ruling and opposition parties, including the promotion of gender equality to ensure balanced representation and participation of women and men; recognition by those in power of the limits on their power; a proper equilibrium between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary; the reform and renewal of political parties; and, democracies that deliver by improving the lives of ordinary people.

#### Strategic Focus for Programmes under Goal 1

The Secretariat is seen by member governments as a significant, neutral, informed stakeholder in assisting countries resolve conflicts, to uphold the rule of law, to strengthen democratic institutions and processes, to implement human rights principles, promote gender equality, and to meet the Commonwealth standards on governance and inclusive

development. The Secretariat is uniquely placed as an intergovernmental organisation with a respected track record, to play a leading role within the Commonwealth and internationally.

- The Secretariat works with member countries as a ‘trusted partner’.
- The Secretariat is flexible, quick to react and can be more responsive to the needs and capacities of smaller Commonwealth member states.
- The Secretariat can call on the wide range and depth of expertise across the Commonwealth to support its work, including Commonwealth envoys for peace, expertise in democracy and the huge body of legal experts with experience in common legal and judicial arenas, as well as its unique network of civil society organisations.

**Goal 1 Peace and Democracy will work through 4 Programmes:**

1. Good Offices for Peace
2. Democracy and Consensus Building
3. Rule of Law
4. Human Rights

## **Programme 1: Good Offices for Peace**

### **Rationale for programme and focus**

This Programme will facilitate the Secretariat's engagement with member countries to support progressive improvement in the political atmosphere when conflict or tensions emerge. It will also assist in consolidating and strengthening public confidence in government institutions and in the role of both public and civil society organisations in upholding democratic institutions and good governance. Therefore a key component of this work is building relationships. It is intuitive and progressive in nature, drawing on the skills and experience of staff and Commonwealth experts to building trust and confidence. More importantly, much of the effort takes place at senior levels and 'behind the scenes' where the Secretariat can operate most directly and effectively.

The programme will focus on the promotion of political dialogue to foster greater democratic space for political parties and civil society to prevent conflict. Activities comprise dialogue and discussions to build understanding and provide the momentum for stakeholders to develop and advance agreements, collaboration with human rights specialists and provision of technical specialists to build the capacity of key institutions such as election management bodies, parliament, the judiciary and human rights bodies. A crucial part of this work is manifest through the Secretariat's close working relationship with strategic partners such as the UN, EU, AU, CARICOM, PIF and High Commissions. Bilateral and national development agencies are also important collaborators. Furthering the Respect and Understanding mandate will thus be an important component of this Programme.

The approach to countries is formally through Special Envoys in Member States or informally through technical assistance and policy advice, with the emphasis on strengthening peace building and promoting best practice across the Commonwealth. The Secretariat is seen as a significant, neutral, informed stakeholder and its assistance has always been well received. The Secretariat has recently developed a 'Commonwealth approach' or framework for ongoing and future engagements related to conflict prevention and resolution arising out of a meeting of Special Envoys in November 2006. This will now inform the Programme strategy. In this Plan period target countries will be identified and strategy papers prepared for each of them. A mid-term visit to assess progress on recommendations will be undertaken, including follow-up discussions on implementation issues.

The success of this Programme will depend on a broad collaborative approach with other technical areas of the Secretariat. This will be particularly critical where an integrated country-focus is adopted, such as in Swaziland, Cameroon and Kenya. Guidance notes for inter-divisional partnerships and collaboration will be developed to ensure lessons can be learned.

The main activities include in the Good Offices Programme will be staff and specialist missions; envoy missions and engagement; the Secretary-General's travel and engagements, speeches and representation; development of high level contacts and participation in networks; provision of technical assistance, and effective management of CMAG, CHOGM and Foreign Ministers' meetings.

**Programme Objective:**

*To prevent conflict and strengthen member countries' institutional capacity to promote vigorously the Commonwealth's fundamental political values.*

**Results**

1. Strategies promoted and adopted which increase ownership and respect for democratic institutions and culture, the rule of law and human rights
2. Dialogue on the peaceful resolution of conflicts facilitated through an integrated Secretariat approach
3. The Secretariat's work on conflict prevention and resolution, peace building and reconstruction incorporates a gender aware approach
4. Strategic partnerships with international and regional organisations and with civil society are strengthened to deliver more effective peace outcomes

**Indicators:**

1. Conflict and political tension reduced or avoided where the Secretariat has played a role
2. Increased representation and participation of women, youth and civil society groups in peace negotiations, agreements and post-conflict processes
3. Evidence that Member States' commitment to democratic principles is maintained
4. Feedback from Governments, regional and international organisations and civil society on the Good Offices work demonstrates endorsement of an effective contribution

## **Programme 2: Democracy and Consensus Building**

### **Rationale for programme and focus**

Many countries continue to face the challenge of consolidating democratic practices and institutions, with the result that in some, conflict can emerge from flawed elections, political exclusion and a lack of full participation. The Secretariat is in a unique position as a neutral stakeholder with a well established and respected track record, to make a significant contribution to consensus-building and coordinated international action.

The programme focus depends partly on the electoral cycle of member states, but also on national and international political developments. Political analysts can predict areas of possible democratic upheaval and try to prepare for the eventuality of intervention, but it is also difficult to predict the exact timing or likelihood of such events. Therefore the Secretariat must retain the flexibility to respond to the political uncertainties of the situation, when coups, unrest, and other unforeseen events required flexibility of action and quickness in response.

The Secretariat therefore cannot plan its activities with complete certainty but will seek to meet demand as fully as possible over the course of the next Plan period. The Programme will be engaged with electoral processes and in strengthening democratic institutions through Commonwealth Observer Teams, Commonwealth Expert Groups, Commonwealth Assessment Missions, and Political Assessment Missions. Technical assistance in a range of specialist fields will be provided to support stronger electoral processes and more democratic practices.

### **Programme objective**

*To build stronger democratic processes across the Commonwealth on political issues.*

### **Results**

1. Adherence to democratic principles and democratic processes is more evident among countries
2. Democratic processes and institutions strengthened, including through the role of the media and civil society
3. Women, youth, other vulnerable groups, and civil society organisations participate more effectively and frequently in decision-making institutions and processes

### **Indicators**

The Programme will use the following:

1. Positive feedback from Governments on the effectiveness of interventions, consultations and meetings such as CHOGM, CMAG and Foreign Ministers Meetings
2. Democratic processes and systems are more transparent with a higher level of dialogue and debate
3. Greater levels of participation by women, youth and civil society groups in democratic processes
4. The media play a more active role in democratic processes across Commonwealth countries

## **Programme 3: Rule of law**

### **Rationale for programme and focus**

This Programme contributes to the achievement of the Commonwealth strategic objective of upholding the rule of law in Commonwealth countries. The Secretariat acts as a catalyst for Commonwealth legal cooperation through support for legal, judicial and constitutional reform, and by strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks which protect and promote the rule of law.

The Secretariat works closely with a range of international institutions and bodies in the development and implementation of its mandates under this Programme. Bilateral, multilateral and regional organisations are its primary partners, but there is strong collaboration with other players such as UNODC, ISS, EU and the US Department of Justice.

The Rule of Law Programme will continue to focus on:

- strengthening judiciaries and judicial processes
- supporting constitutional and legal reforms
- combating trans-national crime, counter terrorism, anti corruption
- promoting mutual legal assistance and international cooperation in criminal matters
- good governance including the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles, access to information, and addressing gender dimensions in the administration of laws and access to justice; and
- supporting national jurisdictions to implement international conventions and obligations by way of training courses, capacity building and model legislative provisions.

### **Programme objective**

*To support member countries in upholding the Rule of Law and to act as a catalyst for Commonwealth legal cooperation*

### **Results**

1. Stronger and more gender-responsive judicial processes
2. Measures and strategies to combat trans-national crime, counter terrorism and anti corruption measures developed and adopted
3. International cooperation on criminal matters supports Commonwealth priorities
4. Commonwealth legal principles more widely understood and more readily incorporated in national situations
5. Model legislative provisions developed in priority areas which enable adoption of international conventions

### **Indicators**

The Secretariat will use the OECD self-evaluation tool to show Commonwealth progress on the implementation of international conventions and treaties, and to show cases where domestic legislation has given effect to international obligations. In particular, the Programme will measure the following:

1. Reduction in the number of requests for assistance, and a change in the nature of support required in delivering constitutional, legal and judicial services
2. An increase in the number of countries adopting anti-corruption and anti-money laundering measures supported by the Secretariat
3. An increase in the number of countries following the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles
4. The level of gender awareness of the judiciary and lawyers increased
5. An increase in the instances of mainstreaming gender equality in constitutions, laws or normative processes
6. An increased number of Commonwealth countries implementing international conventions and treaties

## **Programme 4: Human Rights**

### **Rationale for programme and focus**

The portfolio supports the Commonwealth's commitment to the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights, emphasizing the indivisibility of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The Programme has four broad areas of focus:

- raising awareness about human rights and human rights principles,
- promoting best practices on human rights,
- capacity building, and
- mainstreaming human rights across the Secretariat Programmes.

External partners are High Commissions, national institutions such as national human rights commissions, ombudspersons, and individuals. Internal partners are all Secretariat divisions: the Secretariat has made a commitment to mainstream human rights across all Programmes and to implement a rights-based approach to development.

### **Programme Objective**

*To increase awareness of and respect for human rights in the Commonwealth*

### **Results**

1. Assistance to member countries contributes to the adoption or improved implementation of international human rights instruments
2. Member states supported to ratify UN Human Rights Conventions
3. Key institutions, including civil society, have improved capacity to monitor and protect human rights
4. Secretariat support to member countries facilitates the adoption of best practices on human rights
5. Increased awareness among member countries of international human rights norms, standards and obligations

### **Indicators**

1. An increase in the number of member states ratifying HR treaties and conventions
2. An increase in the number of effective and well functioning human rights institutions in the Commonwealth
3. An increase in the number of member states adopting human rights standards and strengthened compliance with these standards
4. The media and civil society more effectively engaged in discussion with governments on human rights issues and standards
5. Increased awareness in the number of member states identifying women's rights as human rights

## Introduction to **Goal 2 Pro-Poor Growth and Sustainable Development**

*To assist member states to improve their pro-poor growth and sustainable development consistent with the Commonwealths mission and vision.*

### **Comparative advantage**

The Secretariat is one of a large number of international organisations working in the broad area of poverty reduction and sustainable development<sup>9</sup>. Its comparative advantage may be circumscribed but it is effective and is derived from the ability to address issues specific to Commonwealth members in a way that fosters, stimulates and delivers effective outcomes. The focus is entirely on supporting the priorities of Commonwealth members - particularly small states. The programme will also ensure that gender equality, youth participation and human rights are mainstreamed and a rights-based approach to development employed. The advantages of the Secretariat as an advocate for Commonwealth members can be summarized as follows:

- Trusted and neutral partnerships with ministries, national and international organisations and civil society
- South–South cooperation can be more effective when combined with the Secretariat’s trusted role
- The ability to respond in a small but targeted way and more promptly than many other organisations and
- High level and regular access to Government leaders and engagement with senior political and technical organisations provides opportunities to promote consensus, strengthen networking and stimulate sharing.

Within a number of the Programmes under this Goal there are targeted areas of work which focus on those issues which constrain economic or social growth. The Secretariat considers it can play a positive catalytic role alongside other organisations, in addressing these constraints. Issues such as the impact of HIV/AIDS on social cohesion and service delivery, the role of small rural enterprises in providing sustainable livelihoods, managing national investment strategies or borrowed finances in a volatile international climate and strengthening the capacity of countries to develop trade policies which promote inclusive participation in economic growth. Countries and regions with the greatest need, including small and vulnerable economies, will be specifically targeted across in these four Programmes. They will also include activities that address the mandates of Commonwealth ministers.

### **Goal 2: Pro-Poor Growth and Sustainable Development will work through 4 Programmes:**

5. Public Sector Development
6. Economic Development
7. Sustainable Development
8. Human Development

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<sup>9</sup> There are over 150 multilateral agencies, 33 DAC donors and 10 significant non DAC bilateral donors working to this agenda, with a common commitment to the MDGs. There are also some 180 global funds and programmes, hundreds of NGOs and numerous private philanthropic foundations.

## **Programme 5: Public Sector Development**

### **Rationale for Programme and focus**

This Programme works to promote synergies between good governance and development. The core focus is on the overall institutional and capacity development dimensions of governments, with the aim of assisting countries move to a stronger governance framework as a critical requirement for addressing poverty alleviation and sustainable development agendas. Special attention will be paid to mainstreaming gender in this programme. Knowledge transfer, policy advice and technical assistance enable governments to:

- Strengthen institutions that contribute to good governance in member countries
- Respond to country needs in accordance with CHOGM mandates
- Develop public sector capacity for effective delivery of public services
- Develop and enhance the capacity of the public sector to incorporate a gender-responsive approach to policy formulation, planning and programme implementation.

This programme covers the full spectrum of capacity building in public policy, management and administration as well as addressing issues relating to civil society and private sector institutions with public responsibilities. It may be necessary to rationalise this over the course of the Plan period. There are a number of thematic priorities and initiatives in this Strategic Plan:

- Building technical and managerial capacity to continuously improve the performance of public institutions
- Developing a governance framework to guide improved and equitable service delivery by member governments
- Strengthening public service training institutes in partnership with other Commonwealth associations to close public sector skill gaps
- Developing the effective use of information and communication technology strategies, e-governance, and knowledge management.

### **Comparative advantage**

The Secretariat is aware that there are many other actors in this area. Within the overall comparative advantage identified for the Development pillar, this programme argues for the following limited comparative advantage:

- Unique mix of in-house thematic and regional expertise at a single point of access
- Responsive service delivered quickly, flexibly and sensitively to member countries
- Assistance to member countries without the stringent conditions of some donors
- Capacity building that fills strategic gaps that large donors tend to overlook.

### **Global context**

The Programme responds to requests for assistance across a range of development issues to meet the specific needs of member countries in a diverse, complex, and rapidly changing environment. It also responds to CHOGM mandates relating to anti-corruption, ICTs for development, corporate governance, stronger local government and effective public financial management, among others. In addition, policy advocacy of other thematic priorities

affecting Commonwealth governments is an essential element of support for public sector organisations.

### **Implementation approach**

This Programme is managed by the Governance and Institutional Development Division in collaboration with other Secretariat divisions and internal stakeholders, principally the specialist technical divisions. The Programme has been structured around four main clusters which will enhance the focus and improve learning across the thematic areas.

- Advancing Good Governance
- Improving Public Service delivery
- Promoting the use of Information and Communications Technology
- Developing Leadership and human resources management policies

### **Programme Objective**

*To advance good governance by assisting governments build public service capacity, strengthen public institutions and improve service delivery.*

### **Results**

1. Coherent governance frameworks tailored to country circumstances and contributing to enabled, accountable, transparent and gender-sensitive public institutions and governing bodies
2. Public services delivered collaboratively by enabled public, private and civil society organisations in the national interest according to international standards of performance and compliance
3. National e-governance strategies, policy frameworks and smart practices implemented in support of selected countries' development priorities
4. Enabled public sector leaders and professional public services supported by informed human resource policy and capable training institutes and networks.

### **Indicators**

1. Increased citizen satisfaction with specific public services targeted for improvement
2. Increased citizen awareness of, access to, and engagement with government
3. Increased cost-effectiveness of government
4. Increased administrative efficiencies and timeliness
5. Increased private sector opportunities and civil society participation
6. Increased extra-budgetary resources from donors and partners
7. Increased levels of job satisfaction in public services
8. Increased representation of gender, rights and youth issues.

## **Programme 6: Economic Development**

### **Rationale for Programme and focus**

This Programme will assist member states to take advantage of opportunities for economic growth and improve their ability to manage economic development in an equitable and sustainable manner. It will address a range of issues, global, regional or national, which affect the ability of a country to achieve its development targets. Assistance under this programme will take the form of policy development and advice, technical assistance for capacity building, and advocacy and consensus building. The focus will be on advocacy for reform of international institutions, assisting member states to formulate, negotiate and implement trade policy, promotion of trade facilitation and capacity building, diversification of the export base, strengthening debt management, and assisting countries to prepare for access to international capital markets and to become more attractive destinations for investment, promoting and monitoring progress of gender responsive budgets in member countries. Priority will also be on building consensus around reform of the international aid architecture to enhance aid effectiveness, promoting private flows to pre-emerging markets, supporting enterprise development, including better access to SME financing, and natural resource management.

The Programme is anchored in mandates received from CHOGMs and CFMMs as well as requests received from governments and regional organisations. It will be delivered by a number of Secretariat divisions, and collaboration and consultation will be a key feature of implementation. Externally, in addition to Commonwealth organisations, the main partners include the World Bank Group, IMF, WTO, DFID, ITC, and other UN and multilateral and regional and bilateral organisations and institutions, such as FAO, OECD, EC, ACP, OIF, as well as national governments.

### **Comparative advantage**

The Secretariat's capacity to provide cost-effective technical assistance and its role as a 'trusted partner' and 'honest broker' in delivering policy analysis and advice are highly valued, particularly by small states and LDCs. The Secretariat has a track record of contributing to consensus building and brokering policy and negotiating positions among its members on international economic and financial issues.

### **Global context**

The development landscape continues to be a challenging one for many Commonwealth countries. African and small states have been marginalised as globalisation has advanced, and have seen their share of global trade and investment decline.

In recent years, Africa has achieved improved macro-economic stability and a significant upturn in growth driven largely by buoyant commodity prices, debt relief, and improved economic governance. However, investment remains sluggish and progress towards the MDGs has been disappointing. In Sub-Saharan Africa the absolute number of poor has continued to increase and social and economic transformation remains an immediate and pressing challenge for the continent. To achieve the MDG targets, it is recognised that growth needs to be pro-poor, inclusive and mainstream gender concerns.

The vulnerability of small states, most of which are in the Pacific and the Caribbean, has been made more evident in recent years by faster than anticipated erosion of trade preferences; a worsening debt profile; HIV/AIDS; greater frequency and intensity of natural disasters; and increased youth unemployment, crime and insecurity. Diversification based on an outward-oriented service sector led development strategy is a high priority for these economies; as is regional integration as a response to both the challenges and the opportunities of globalisation.

South Asia has recorded impressive growth rates during this decade. However, inclusive growth remains a priority for countries in the region. Despite progress in reducing the number of poor people, the region continues to be home to the largest number of the world's poor. Persistent challenges remain in the delivery of basic services to the deprived and this is compounded by rapid urbanisation and inadequate rural infrastructure.

At the global level, financial volatility in major markets, barriers to trade in both goods and services, and shortcomings in institutional mechanisms for global economic governance have serious implications for the health of the world economy, and continue to have adverse impact on the economic prospects of developing countries. It will be very important to seek to ensure a development friendly outcome to the Doha Round, and to continue support for fair and balanced regional and other trading arrangements, such as the ACP-EU Partnership Agreements. The Commonwealth can play an important advocacy and lobbying role in promoting reform of the architecture for global economic governance, including of international financial institutions. It also has an important role to play in conveying and disseminating best practice in areas such as investment, promotion, debt management, SME development, improving productivity, and achieving economic diversification.

### **Programme Objective**

*To strengthen policies and systems that support inclusive and sustainable economic growth in member states.*

### **Results**

1. Member states better able to attract capital flows and manage increased levels of investment, including for private sector development
2. Greater understanding by governments of macro-economic and global financial issues and the impact of global changes on national economic and social development, including the differentiated impact on women and men
3. Member states improved capacity to negotiate on trade and to formulate, manage and implement gender sensitive trade policies
4. Commonwealth assistance supports member states in negotiating support, and advancing international trade and economic agenda in international settings
5. Member states participate effectively in the international trading system
6. Member countries better able to promote viable competitive enterprises that generate employment, income and reduce poverty
7. Countries more effective in managing national debt (public and private)
8. Member states able to effectively delimit maritime boundaries.
9. Improvement in the management and development of natural resources - including mining, oil and gas - by member states.

## **Indicators**

1. Growth in investment flows through Secretariat sponsored instruments
2. Positive feedback on and citation of Secretariat research and analysis
3. Quality of policy advice and support for an enabling environment for growth and stability
4. Improved terms of trade and exports for member states, including through legislative and regulatory reform.
5. Ministries of Trade and other relevant organisations sensitized to gender issues in trade policy formulation and implementation
6. Debt levels do not constrain countries in overall financial management.
7. Higher survival rates of SMEs and an increase in the contribution of SME businesses to GDP
8. Increased numbers of successful women in enterprise and greater and more equitable market access for women producers and entrepreneurs
9. Gender is effectively mainstreamed in aid effectiveness and public financing through the introduction of gender responsive budgets.
10. More frequent settlement of maritime boundary issues through negotiation (rather than litigation)
11. More countries are closely aligned with international legislation on maritime boundaries
12. Increase in number of member countries able to develop and enact policies, laws, regulatory arrangements and codes relating to natural resource management.

## **Programme 7: Environmentally Sustainable Development**

### **Rationale for programme and focus**

The Environmentally Sustainable Development Programme is anchored in the Commonwealth Heads of Government 1989 Langkawi Declaration, which recognizes the environment as a key resource for and a significant factor in pro-poor development. The Programme also builds on lessons learned during the previous Strategic Plan, and confirms that the environment is the basis for economic and human development, notwithstanding that the assimilative and regenerative capacities of the natural world are being rapidly eroded. Recent reports (such as the Stern Review) demonstrate the desirability of developing countries leapfrogging traditional development approaches to move towards more sustainable pathways by capturing new opportunities for 'green growth'. Securing financial and technological support for this change thus becomes an important challenge.

In this context it is accepted that Commonwealth members are concerned to safeguard their remaining ecological capital without jeopardizing development and to use their natural resources sustainably for human benefit and poverty alleviation. Member states are facing two rapidly evolving environmental challenges which are a risk to development - an unprecedented growth in urbanisation and overcrowded slums, and the impact of climate change. The scale and speed of these changes, overlaid on existing vulnerability to natural disasters, are already undermining progress towards the MDG and, if not addressed, will continue to impede progress towards MDG targets. In view of their different roles, women and men will be differently affected by ecological changes or natural disasters, and these differences will need to be taken into account and addressed.

The Commonwealth constitutes the heartland of concern and action. Almost one in six Commonwealth citizens live in slums - poverty has become an urbanised phenomenon. Small island developing states and least developed countries - the two groups most vulnerable to climate change - constitute two thirds of the Commonwealth's membership. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has identified countries in Africa and Asia as most vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change.

### **Comparative advantage**

The links between environmental degradation, population, poverty and other development issues are complex and require an inclusive approach. The Secretariat will leverage its comparative advantage to build partnerships and foster greater co-operation among Commonwealth and international organizations to develop and deliver the Programme.

On human settlements, the Secretariat works through a multi-stakeholder partnership called ComHabitat which provides a platform for developing country concerns and fosters relationships for effective action. The strategic objectives for ComHabitat, endorsed by Ministers in 2007, are to improve financial investment in shelter and access to essential services; to strengthen leadership and governance and to reduce risks and build community resilience in an urbanising world. The Secretariat convenes a high-level Ministerial forum (the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements) and will take action on specific areas of the ComHabitat work plan by bringing national perspectives to solutions that require collaborative action.

In the area of climate change, the Commonwealth Secretariat will focus on implementation of the Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan<sup>10</sup>. Particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening the quality and participation of highly vulnerable member states in international negotiations on climate change. The Commonwealth will also use high-level fora to help governments examine and take action to address the human and social impacts of climate change. It will also work closely with Commonwealth and other networks, for example universities and regional institutions, to strengthen the capacity of societies to respond to climate change challenges. Particular emphasis will be given to analysing the economics of climate change, helping countries manage the challenges of climate change and identifying new opportunities created through international climate policies and approaches. Finally, the Commonwealth Secretariat will renew its efforts to support pro-active natural disaster risk management in member countries.

The Commonwealth Secretariat works with a wide range of partner organizations in fostering environmentally sustainable development. These include UN partners such as UN Habitat and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, regional organizations, Commonwealth professional networks such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Commonwealth Forestry Association, members of the ComHabitat Management Group including the Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the Commonwealth Association of Planners and Homeless International, and the private sector, youth and professional associations.

### **Global context**

The latest UN Global Environment Outlook clearly indicates a continuing crisis in the levels of environmental degradation and resource extraction. Commonwealth efforts on natural resources management will contribute to more sustainable approaches to development and help member states to capture new opportunities for 'green growth'.

The Commonwealth goal on human settlements is aligned to the MDGs, especially those related to slum dwellers, water, sanitation and education. Action through Commonwealth networks will underpin progress towards these MDG targets.

The Stern Review has shown that early action on climate change can be very cost effective. The Secretariat's work on climate change and disaster risk management takes place in this context and in the context of negotiations on a post-Kyoto framework (the Bali Road Map). The Secretariat will support its most vulnerable member states, also those most capacity constrained, to be effective at both the international and national policy levels to pro-actively address the social and economic implications of climate change.

### **Implementation approach**

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<sup>10</sup> The Plan calls for action in 6 areas: (1) quality and participation of governments in international negotiations on climate change; (2) consideration of the human and economic aspects of climate change, drawing on Commonwealth networks; (3) improved land use management and sustainable use of forest resources, including efforts to widen international knowledge and support of the Iwokrama Rainforest Programme; (4) impact of the concept of carbon miles in food production and exports, especially with respect to developing countries; (5) natural disaster risk management in member countries; and (6) technical assistance and other support to least developed countries and vulnerable small states.

To help implement the programme, the Commonwealth Secretariat will undertake the following:

- mainstream environmental sustainability considerations in all its programmes, policies and activities
- strengthen existing, or develop new, environmental assessment procedures to screen all Secretariat's activities
- clearly demarcate internal responsibility in implementation
- assist member-countries in building adequate human and institutional capacity to deal with global environmental issues and build partnerships.

### **Programme objective**

*To assist members, especially small and least developed countries, to manage risk and identify opportunities for environmentally sustainable economic development and pro-poor growth.*

### **Results**

1. An operational plan for the Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan developed and under implementation by 2010
2. A multi-stakeholder network operates as a forum for action and discussion on human settlement issues.
3. Ten cities are measuring progress on the Commonwealth goal on human settlements
4. Member states more effective in preparing for and responding to natural disasters
5. Advice on natural resources management contributes to governments adopting more effective policies and strategies for achieving environmentally sustainable development
6. Countries supported develop a greater appreciation of the different impact of climate change on specific groups, particularly on women.

### **Indicators**

1. Governments sign on to the Lake Victoria Action Plan implementation strategy.
2. Vulnerable member states provided with concise, policy-relevant information on climate change negotiations and adaptation approaches
3. Climate change negotiators from small states and LDCs have enhanced skills and better access to information, which they apply in the negotiating process
4. Network facilitates sharing of policy-relevant advice on areas outlined in the ComHabitat strategic plan
5. Increase in number of states able effectively to plan for and manage risks and disasters
6. Concerns of member states, especially small states and LDCs, highlighted and addressed in international meetings (e.g. forestry concerns).
7. Secretariat adopts an environmental strategy and environmental impact criteria are used in assessment of Secretariat projects and programmes.
8. Countries incorporate gender dimensions in planning for climate change and risk management.

## **Programme 8: Human Development**

### **Rationale for Programme and focus**

The goal of the Human Development programme is to support Commonwealth governments in their efforts to improve the economic and social conditions of their citizens. The Programme embraces sustainable livelihoods, gender, health, education, youth and sport to support and strengthen social cohesion. It incorporates the main thrust of the Secretariat's efforts to address the MDGs' social targets in health, gender, and education and it also argues for a stronger emphasis on the participation of young people in development processes, recognising the positive effect this can have on generating social change. It also has the responsibility for supporting gender as a mainstreamed focus in all areas of human, economic and social development across the Secretariat. There is ample evidence to demonstrate the need to invest in gender equality, health, education and youth, not just as a matter of social justice and human rights, but because of the impact that greater social inclusion and participation can have on economic growth and sustainable development. In response to the recent CHOGM mandates\*, the Programme will encapsulate climate change and social cohesion issues, acknowledging the specific impact of youth violence on social stability.

### **Comparative advantage**

The Human Development programme will utilise the following comparative advantages to advance the Secretariat's work:

- The opportunity to focus on specific dimensions of the social sector, including how groups or communities can be included in the development process. Gender equality, youth participation and rights-based approaches to development will be mainstreamed across the whole portfolio and in all Programmes.
- The Secretariat has developed analytical and technical expertise in specific areas under this Programme. These include trade and gender, education and teaching tools for professional development, strategies to empower and mobilise young people and to stimulate youth enterprises, fostering vibrant youth networks and promoting professional and vocational education for youth.
- The Secretariat has experience in mobilising diverse networks and stimulating eclectic convocations to promote dialogue among high-level policy makers, civil society, funders and donors to develop consensus on difficult issues. The Secretariat provides a forum for continued policy debate and sharing practices and experiences on issues of human development.
- The Secretariat can readily mobilize technical assistance and undertake analytical research on specialist policy and technical issues.

### **Global context**

There have been rapid and dramatic changes in societies and in their constituent communities over the period of the last Strategic Plan, often negative changes which have had profound and difficult consequences for many Commonwealth countries. The international development community has responded with renewed commitment to address the principles and to meet the targets for effective development as set out in the MDGs. New aid modalities

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\* In particular, the Respect and Understanding mandate.

have been developed in the effort to improve development outcomes and increase the impact of resource flows. Private foundations are now playing a key role, particularly in the health and education sectors. The commitment to the goals of Education for All (EFA) has intensified, particularly through donor partnerships such as the International Health Facility and the Fast Track Initiative in education.

The increase in resources has been coupled with an increase in the number of actors and partnerships which has raised transaction costs at the country level, highlighting the need for harmonisation and greater efficiency in delivery. The focus on the development indicators for Africa, which lag behind most other regions, will continue to be given high priority. Gender issues will remain a difficult area, particularly in developing effective strategies to address the low indicators for women's health, education and economic empowerment.

### **Implementation approach**

The Programme has a specific focus on the MDGs but will include a strong approach on advocacy for policy change, social reform to enable greater participation and inclusion and developing and promoting good practices. The Secretariat is committed to providing technical assistance and undertaking analytical research and studies on specialist policy or technical aspects, an important way in which the Programme can contribute to international efforts. Collaboration, partnerships and active networking among global players will be a key operational feature under this Programme.

### **Programme objective**

*To support Commonwealth countries to create an enabling environment in which all citizens can develop their potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests.*

### **Results**

1. Commonwealth experiences and strategies for achieving inclusive social development and promotion of social cohesion contribute to human development
2. Support for selected countries is effective in advancing progress towards specific MDG targets (gender, health and education)
3. Gender mainstreamed across Commonwealth Secretariat policies and programmes
4. The Gender, Education, Health and Youth Plans of member countries effectively meet development needs of women and men, girls and boys
5. Advocacy for gender equality and human rights integrated in MDGs and other global frameworks and initiatives
6. Youth, women and marginalized groups better supported to achieve sustainable livelihoods
7. Young people, women and civil society groups empowered to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from good governance and equitable development processes

### **Indicators**

1. Documentation and dissemination of practical and effective strategies for social cohesion
2. Indicators for health, gender, and education in selected countries show positive trends (MDG indicators)

3. Inclusive development strategies and policies implemented in selected countries
4. Gender sensitive monitoring tools and training utilized in project design, implementation and evaluation processes within the Commonwealth Secretariat
5. Progress in implementation of Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment, Health and Education Plans (assessed where applicable through agreed M & E frameworks)
6. Gender sensitive human development targets/indicators developed and achieved in MDGs and other global frameworks and initiatives