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**THE COMMONWEALTH
PLAN OF ACTION FOR
GENDER EQUALITY**

2005-2015

(Revised Draft)

**Commonwealth Secretariat
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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL

[Text to be prepared for the published version after 7WAMM]

FOREWORD

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 This document consists of four sections. **Section 1** introduces the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PoA), its background and its place in the Commonwealth's overall framework and agenda for development, democracy and human rights. **Section 2** outlines the achievements of the 1995 Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its 2000 Update¹, identifies lessons learned and challenges to be addressed in the next decade, and highlights the Commonwealth's areas of comparative advantage which will underpin its work programme. **Section 3** analyses the four critical areas for Commonwealth action covered by the PoA, and makes recommendations for strategic actions by member governments and the Secretariat in relation to these areas. **Section 4** outlines how governments and the Secretariat will implement the recommendations in collaboration with partners and how accountability will be ensured through monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

2 The PoA reflects the Commonwealth's principles and values and incorporates its responses to the differential impacts of global changes and challenges on women and men, girls and boys. It supports and works towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the objectives of gender equality expressed in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) and 2000 Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document.

3 The PoA views poverty reduction, the protection and promotion of human rights, the strengthening of democracy and gender equality as intrinsically inter-related. In fact, the MDGs cannot be fully attained while women/girls and men/boys do not enjoy equal rights, treatment and access to resources in a climate of freedom from discrimination. The PoA therefore takes a rights-based approach to all the critical areas it addresses, and is grounded in the framework of international and regional human rights conventions and other instruments.

4 The four critical areas that the Commonwealth focuses on in this PoA are:

- I Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
- II Gender, human rights and law
- III Gender and economic empowerment
- IV Gender and HIV/AIDS

5 Within these critical areas the PoA aims to build on and deepen the Commonwealth gender mainstreaming approach introduced in the 1995 PoA and its 2000 Update, particularly when addressing persistent challenges such as gender-based violence and the achievement of women's full participation in leadership and decision-making.

¹ *Advancing the Commonwealth Agenda into the New Millennium (2000-2005): An Update to the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2000.

6 Democracy is a fundamental value of the Commonwealth. Women's participation in democracy, and in peace processes, is crucial for the achievement of sustainable development. A target of no less than 30 per cent of women in the political, public and private sectors by 2005 was recommended by Fifth Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs (5WAMM) in 1996 and endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Edinburgh in 1997. In 2000, the Sixth Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs (6WAMM) recommended that the Commonwealth take action, in collaboration with other international organisations and civil society, to include women at the highest levels of peace-building, peacekeeping, conflict prevention, mediation and resolution, and post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction activities.

7 While there have been some achievements, the challenge remains to: demonstrate the impact of women's contribution to democracy, peace and conflict in member countries; promote accountability for international legal frameworks that governments have ratified; domesticate international standards in national constitutions and legislations as tools for promoting de-facto equality; encourage political parties to adopt the 30 per cent target for women candidates; and mainstream gender equality at all stages of the peace process. There is a need to develop peace education curricula and promote a culture of peace, geared particularly towards young people.

8 International human rights instruments impose a duty on states parties to guarantee equality of rights between women and men. However, women's and girls' human rights continue to be widely violated, and they face different forms of discrimination and disadvantage at different stages in the life cycle. Because customary laws, practices and traditions often affect people more than statutory laws on a day-to-day basis, it is critical to work in partnership with traditional, cultural, and religious institutions and leaders, particularly to address harmful traditional practices and promote harmonisation of statutory and customary laws, where appropriate. Women's rights regarding access to and ownership of land and property must also be promoted and protected.

9 Gender-based violence remains widespread and has clear links with many other factors, such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, property and land rights, race/ethnicity, age and sexual orientation. An integrated response is essential to address it. The rapid growth of trafficking in persons is causing increasing global concern. Anti-trafficking legislation must embrace a human rights approach and protect the rights of those most vulnerable to abuse.

10 Special attention needs to be paid to the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly women, who continue to be marginalised and disadvantaged in comparison to other groups in society.

11 Poverty is not only based on lack of income but is also linked to lack of access to political, economic, social, natural and cultural resources. Gender inequality causes and exacerbates the impact of poverty on women. In order to achieve poverty reduction, enhancing women's capabilities is of critical importance. Gender equality needs to be mainstreamed into programmes and processes related to poverty reduction such as the

MDGs, PRSPs and SWAps. Women's health, including women's and girl's sexual and reproductive rights and maternal mortality, are also priority issues.

12 While globalisation and trade liberalisation offer new opportunities for economic growth and poverty reduction, they also pose critical challenges related to loss of livelihoods and employment, particularly for women. Multilateral trade processes need to be engendered, with women participating meaningfully in the negotiations towards just and fair trading agreements and systems.

13 In order to effectively address the feminisation of both labour and poverty, the Commonwealth will broaden its approach to gender and economic empowerment. This includes the creation of an enabling environment for women by establishing frameworks for core labour standards, social protection, the identification and development of appropriate skills and promoting women's organisations and networking. Improved access to productive resources, markets, skills and extension services is also needed for women, especially in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

14 The next phase of developing work with gender-responsive budgets will focus on the revenue side of budgets, and on processes to mainstream and monitor gender budget analysis to ensure that these efforts are institutionalised.

15 Poverty and gender inequalities are driving factors in the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS. Women and girls are more susceptible to contracting HIV not only for biological reasons but also because they lack the power to negotiate safe sex or refuse unwanted sex. Their inferior political and legal status perpetuates poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunity in social, economic and cultural spheres of activity. Women's empowerment is a strategy for reducing their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and alleviating the impact of the disease.

16 The specific needs of HIV/AIDS infected and affected women, including care-givers and those at risk of infection through gender-based violence and poverty, need to be addressed. Gender equality should be mainstreamed into multisectoral, national, regional and international policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS. The Commonwealth Youth Ambassadors for Positive Living Initiative should also be supported and promoted as a means of preventing the spread of the disease among young people, particularly girls and young women.

17 Lack of availability of and access to female-controlled prevention methods are a critical factor in the increasing infection rate among women and girls. Greater attention needs to be paid to research and investment in microbicides, improving the female condom and exploring other forms of female-controlled prevention.

18 The PoA recognises that men and boys are essential partners in achieving gender equality. There are emerging gaps affecting men and it is critical that the Commonwealth engage actively with institutions and partners that work with men on gender equality issues. The PoA also promotes the inclusion of young persons in all programmes designed to achieve gender equality.

19 The Secretariat will provide increased support to governments in the implementation of the PoA, provide policy advice and technical assistance on the application of gender mainstreaming especially gender analysis and planning, and related issues identified by governments. For each critical area the PoA identifies strategies and mechanisms by which Commonwealth governments and the Secretariat will advance gender equality.

20 As well as strengthening the capacity of national women's machineries (NWMs) to mainstream gender equality, the Secretariat and other Commonwealth associations will work with other key constituencies including ministries, local governments, parliamentarians, the judiciary, universities, public service training institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs), acting as advocate, broker and catalyst in the promotion of gender equality and mainstreaming.

21 The PoA is firmly grounded in partnership as the most effective way of working towards gender equality in the context of the Commonwealth's areas of comparative advantage and the principle of common values in diversity. The Commonwealth will strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ones, especially with organisations that have expertise in the four critical areas.

22 The Commonwealth sees the four critical areas as inter-related and aims to integrate its implementation through various strategies such as generating and sharing knowledge and information, capacity building and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

23 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting will be carried out in a variety of ways, including the Secretary-General's biennial report to CHOGM, periodic meetings of Ministers Responsible for Women's/Gender Affairs; as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities by the Secretariat, including gender audits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This new Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PoA) provides the framework within which the Commonwealth will advance its commitment to gender equality and equity.² The PoA incorporates the Commonwealth's response to the differential impacts of global changes on women and men, builds on achievements to date, seeks to close persistent gaps and engages with new and emerging challenges. The PoA will guide Commonwealth action for the 2005–2015 decade with a mid-term review and update in 2010. It will form part of the Commonwealth's contribution to the Beijing+10 Global Review in 2005.

1.2 Gender equality is one of the fundamental principles of the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) Harare Declaration of 1991. The framework on gender equality has been provided by Commonwealth PoAs on Women and Development (1987) and Gender and Development (1995). The 1995 PoA, which formed part of the Commonwealth's contribution to the Beijing Conference and Platform for Action (BPFA), made the paradigm shift from a focus on women to a gender mainstreaming³ approach. It was updated in 2000 to reflect emerging gender equality issues in the new millennium. The Update provided a framework for strategic interventions grouped under two main policy priority areas:

- Human rights, peace and political participation; and
- Macroeconomics and social development.

1.3 This PoA responds to the Commonwealth Secretariat's Mission Statement:

We work as a trusted partner for all Commonwealth people as a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance; a catalyst for global consensus-building; and a source of assistance for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

² **Gender equality** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that individuals' rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both men and women are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

Gender equity goes further than equality of opportunity to look at outcomes. Treating women and men, or girls and boys, equally does not automatically ensure that they obtain equal outcomes and benefits, since there are many structural factors that may militate against this. Work towards gender equity therefore looks at structural power relations in society as well as material resources, and may include taking positive or affirmative action to ensure that policies and programmes benefit women/girls and men/boys equally.

³ **Gender mainstreaming** is defined in the UN ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 as "...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension 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 is to achieve gender equality."

The PoA reflects the Commonwealth's fundamental values: democracy and good governance; respect for human rights and the rule of law; equality between women and men; and sustainable development and the reduction of poverty. The PoA will build on the Commonwealth's areas of comparative advantage (see 2.10).

1.4 It is guided by the priorities set out in the CHOGM 2002 Coolum Declaration, and takes account of the CHOGM 2003 Aso Rock Declaration's vision of a Commonwealth committed to development and democracy as mutually reinforcing goals (see 3.6). It seeks to advance gender equality through Commonwealth governments and the network of Commonwealth institutions (see Appendix V). Gender equality is being mainstreamed in the Secretariat's new governance structure and its 2004–2008 Strategic Plan.⁴ The PoA responds to the provisions on gender balance and equity in the Commonwealth Principles on accountability and the relationship between the three branches of government (2003).

1.5 The PoA reinforces the Commonwealth's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for reducing poverty, empowering women and improving women's and girls' access to health and education as well as to the principles enshrined in the BPFA (1995) and the Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document (2000).

1.6 The PoA is committed to the promotion of a rights-based approach to gender equality by implementing the provisions of international, regional and national human rights instruments and mechanisms.

1.7 Issues of socio-economic development, democracy and peace are inextricably linked to gender equality. Thus, the PoA views gender equality not only as a goal in its own right but also as a key factor in enhancing democracy and peace, reducing poverty and hunger, ensuring education for all, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality and combating HIV/AIDS. Advancing gender equality across the Commonwealth will contribute to development, democracy and peace.

1.8 The PoA advocates that the achievement of gender equality should be undertaken in partnership with men and boys. Also, recognising that over half of Commonwealth citizens are young persons under 30 years of age and that by 2015 the proportion is likely to increase to 60-70 per cent in many member countries, it promotes the inclusion of young persons in all programmes designed to achieve gender equality.

1.9 The Secretariat's strategy is based on working closely with national women's machineries (NWMs) and other relevant ministries and agencies in their efforts to promote gender equality. The PoA seeks to strengthen the financial and human resource capacity of NWMs to act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming in member countries.

⁴ The Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2004/5-2007/8: Programme 14 on Gender Equality and Equity will pursue the objective of "strengthening the capacity of governments and civil society to achieve gender equality and equity in political, legal, social and economic policy, planning and programme implementation."

1.10 The PoA seeks to promote strong and dynamic partnerships in order to accelerate the achievement of gender equality through advocacy, brokering, consensus-building and sharing of knowledge, information and good practice. Partners include Commonwealth member governments, the network of Commonwealth institutions, the United Nations and its agencies, international financial institutions, multilateral and bilateral agencies, regional groupings (see Appendix VI), regional initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector.

2 ASSESSING COMMONWEALTH PROGRESS

Achievements

2.1 Commonwealth governments have adopted gender mainstreaming as the most effective strategy for achieving gender equality. A review of achievements in promoting gender equality since 1995 indicates significant advances in areas related both to the development and use of mechanisms for mainstreaming gender equality by governments and the Secretariat, and to actions on policy priorities identified in the 1995 PoA and its 2000 Update.

2.2 The following are some examples of the progress made by member countries:⁵

- i. In response to the target set by the Fifth Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs (5WAMM), requiring that by 2005 at least 30 per cent of those in political and decision-making positions should be women, 12 Commonwealth countries had achieved women's representation of between 20 and 30 per cent by October 2003, with three (Mozambique, New Zealand and South Africa) consistently attaining the 30 per cent target. Since 1999, 24 countries have recorded an increase in female parliamentary representation, and there has been an appreciable rise in the number of female Ministers and Deputy Ministers.
- ii. The Secretariat has done pioneering work on Gender-Responsive Budgets (GRBs), piloting its use in some countries, and developing tools and good practice. GRBs are being implemented in 50 countries internationally, 23 of which are Commonwealth countries. The GRB programme, spearheaded by the Secretariat in collaboration with other global partners, has promoted the use of the national budget as an instrument for ensuring that all sector programmes benefit women/girls and men/boys equally.
- iii. The Secretariat has developed the Gender Management System (GMS) as the Commonwealth's sector-wide approach to gender mainstreaming in support of member countries. The GMS promotes gender equality as a guiding principle in

⁵ For detailed accounts see the Secretary-General's biennial Reports to CHOGM on the Implementation of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its 2000 Update. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2003.

mainstream policy-making, planning, programme implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The GMS series of manuals provides a practical framework for applying gender analysis tools to priority sectors such as finance, education, trade and industry, and cross-cutting development issues such as poverty and the MDGs, HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, and post-conflict reconstruction (see Appendix VII).

- iv. Several governments have made efforts to integrate a gender perspective into various aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peace agreements, peace-building, peace-keeping and post-conflict reconstruction. The Secretariat has supported this by organising regional symposia in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.
- v. A number of Commonwealth countries have made legislative and procedural provisions to combat domestic and other forms of gender-based violence. Some 11 Caribbean countries have put in place laws on gender-based violence drawing on the Secretariat's model legislation, and 12 SADC and East African countries have developed national action plans. The Secretariat has supported these initiatives through regional judicial colloquia on the promotion of the human rights of women and the girl child, and workshops in Africa, Asia and the Pacific on the Secretariat's integrated approach to gender-based violence.
- vi. At CHOGM 2003 Commonwealth governments reaffirmed their commitment to combating the spread and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS. Ongoing activities include mainstreaming gender equality in the multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS, strengthening the youth perspective of national AIDS policies, and advocacy aimed at involving men in HIV/AIDS prevention. Work on gender and HIV/AIDS has been undertaken with several African governments (e.g. Botswana, Ghana, Kenya and Namibia), and regional initiatives have been carried out through SADC and ECOWAS.

Lessons learned

2.3 Despite these achievements, there is now a clear need to accelerate implementation by member countries of both key international conventions and treaties and national gender equality policies, plans and programmes, to extend the range of partnerships, to pursue measurable results-oriented activities, and to develop more stringent monitoring of such implementation based on agreed targets and appropriate gender indicators.

2.4 This PoA is guided by reflection on both the achievements and gaps of the 1995 PoA and its 2000 Update. There is a need to deepen the work already begun, and continuing to work on areas of persistent concern with renewed focus. The current global context throws up new issues related to armed conflict and terrorism, the opportunities and challenges of globalisation, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Attention to gender and economic empowerment needs to be broadened beyond macroeconomic policy to address the meso- and micro-levels that affect women's livelihoods in the formal and informal economy.

2.5 In 1995 the Secretariat's primary constituency on gender issues was NWMs, but increased awareness of the importance of gender equality underscores the need not

only to strengthen NWMs but also to mainstream gender equality in ministries such as finance, planning, health and education. Strategic partnerships with other Commonwealth associations representing key constituencies such as parliamentarians, the judiciary, the private sector,⁶ the media and CSOs have also proven to be effective in advancing the achievement of gender equality.

2.6 Focused implementation needs to be underpinned by sex-disaggregated data, and in many Commonwealth countries this is lacking or uneven. Governments need to enhance disaggregated data collection (by sex, age, ethnicity and other relevant factors) in order to improve their information and analysis for planning and programme delivery.

Current and emerging challenges

2.7 Major social, economic and political changes, particularly in relation to conflict, globalisation, poverty and HIV/AIDS, have vital implications for gender equality. For example, conflicts in Commonwealth countries are increasing in number and are steadily worsening in their impact on the lives of civilians, with clear and disturbing gender aspects (e.g. rape with impunity used as a weapon of war, abduction of girls, child soldiers, and refugees and internally displaced persons). One-third of the estimated 1.2 billion people in the world living on less than US\$1 a day are Commonwealth citizens,⁷ as are 64 per cent of the 2.8 billion people who live on under US\$2 a day. Over two-thirds of these are women. Of the 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS,⁸ 60 per cent are Commonwealth citizens, and nine of the most affected countries are Commonwealth member states. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that women account for more than half of all newly infected adults and, worldwide, 15.7 million women are living with HIV.⁹

2.8 This PoA sharpens the focus on working towards gender equality in partnership with men and boys, and also recognises emerging male gender gaps and issues. These include boys' underachievement in education, the issue of child soldiers and young men in armed conflicts, and the pivotal role of young men in HIV/AIDS and its prevention. Men are both victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence in armed and other forms of conflict. As traditionally male-dominated industries collapse or are reorganised in the global economy, men frequently face unemployment. The PoA recognises that there is a diversity of regional and national experience in this respect, which will need to be addressed appropriately.

2.9 The PoA recognises that poverty reduction and socio-economic development cannot be achieved unless women have equal access to social and economic

⁶ These Commonwealth associations include the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA), and the Commonwealth Business Women's Network (CBWN) (see Appendix V).

⁷ Commonwealth Secretariat, *Making Democracy Work for Pro-Poor Development, Report by Commonwealth Group of Experts*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003.

⁸ UNAIDS data, 2003; see www.unaids.org

⁹ WHO, *HIV-Infected Women and their Families: Psychosocial Support and Related Issues. A Literature Review*. Geneva: WHO, 2003.

resources. Conversely, women's livelihoods are critical to their ability to be free from gender-based violence, to negotiate safe sex and to exercise political influence.

Building on the Commonwealth's areas of comparative advantage

2.10 The Commonwealth's areas of comparative advantage respond to the Commonwealth's principles and values: democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, gender equality, sustainable development and poverty reduction. They also include issues related to least developed countries (LDCs), small states and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Common values and similarities among member countries in political, administrative, legal, educational and other systems also represent a strength, facilitating consensus-building and the sharing of experiences, expertise and resources.

2.11 The Commonwealth recognises that gender differences do not exist in a vacuum but intersect with a number of other factors of diversity, such as class/caste, race/ethnicity, age, religion, dis/ability and sexual orientation. Diversity is intrinsic to the Commonwealth, which derives strength from its member countries' mix of peoples, geographical environments and levels of economic development, and uses the principle of common values in diversity to seize opportunities to share experiences and resources and develop consultative and collaborative processes.

2.12 The establishment by the Secretariat of a new Division, the Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD), through merging the Gender, Education and Health sections, provides an excellent opportunity for mainstreaming gender equality into two of the most critical sectors of development, education and health, and thus for meeting several of the MDGs.

3 CRITICAL AREAS FOR COMMONWEALTH ACTION

3.1 The Commonwealth focuses on four critical areas in this PoA:

- I Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
- II Gender, human rights and law
- III Gender and economic empowerment
- IV Gender and HIV/AIDS

I Gender, democracy, peace and conflict

3.2 As a Commonwealth fundamental value, democracy is well articulated in various documents, notably in the 1991 Harare Declaration. The Commonwealth promotes and supports plural democracy, characterised by representative government, equal participation, transparency, accountability and responsiveness to all its citizens, women, men, young and old persons.

3.3 5WAMM in Trinidad and Tobago (1996) recommended that “member countries should be encouraged to achieve a target of no less than 30 per cent of women in decision-making in the political, public and private sectors by 2005”. This target was subsequently endorsed by CHOGM in Edinburgh in 1997. Countries with proportional representation systems (e.g. New Zealand and South Africa) have recorded a marked increase in women’s representation in parliament, and have encouraged women to pursue and advance political careers. Similarly, decentralisation, with its devolution of power and resources, appears to be creating better access and opportunities for women’s effective participation and representation in government.

3.4 Many Commonwealth countries have embraced democratic systems of government, introduced accountability measures, and increased women’s representation through adoption and implementation of quotas and affirmative action measures. For example, Uganda introduced a constitutional reform to provide for one woman Member of Parliament per district and one third of local council positions for women. Similarly, India’s 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments reserved one-third of all local government seats for women, which has resulted in over 500,000 women being elected to the Panchayat Raj throughout the country. Following the first post-conflict national elections in Sierra Leone in 2002, the percentage of women in parliament increased from 8 to 15 per cent.

3.5 However, many governments remain fragile and lack the institutional infrastructure to sustain democracy, such as Ombudspersons, electoral commissions, parliamentary oversight bodies, an impartial judiciary to uphold the rule of law and human rights, and adequately trained civil servants, including women. Even where democratic institutions are firmly established, citizens, particularly women, continue to be marginalised and have little access or capacity to influence national policies, plans and programmes.

3.6 Women’s participation in the frontline of democracy and peace processes is crucial. For women to be able to influence decisions that affect their lives and those of their families, their political, social and economic empowerment must form part of the democratic ideal that contributes to sustainable development. In fact, since women constitute more than half the population, sustainable development cannot be achieved without them. Democracy and development thus need to be seen as mutually reinforcing goals essential to the achievement of gender equality.

3.7 The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Declaration (CMAG) is a body set up to monitor and ensure adherence to fundamental values of democracy and good governance, respond to serious and persistent violations of these in member countries and make appropriate recommendations. The Secretary-General’s Good Offices, reaffirmed most recently by CHOGM in Abuja in 2003, supports capacity-

building initiatives to prevent and resolve conflicts, and to ensure increased women's participation and representation in peace processes.

3.8 In the Commonwealth and globally, armed conflicts within and between states, sharpened by growing terrorism and assisted by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, are on the increase. Unequal power relations, lack of access to resources, intolerance and lack of respect for individual rights and freedoms fuel armed and other forms of conflicts. Statistics show that civilian populations are increasingly the targets of a myriad of human rights violations such as trafficking in persons, rape with impunity used as a weapon of war, abduction of girls, recruitment of child soldiers and other crimes against humanity. These actions and crimes, committed by both state and non-state actors, violate conventions and treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the four Geneva Conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), with their various Optional Protocols. The differential impacts of conflicts on women, men and children, and the challenges they create, have profound democratic and developmental implications for all humanity.

3.9 The 1995 BPFA identified the effects of conflict on women as one of its 12 critical areas of concern. It affirmed the need to increase women's participation in conflict resolution and peace-building at decision-making levels. It also recommended strategic actions to be taken by governments, the international community, the private sector and CSOs, urging adequate protection of women and children during times of conflict. These recommendations arose principally from a view of women as 'victims' of armed conflict. However, more recently women's active and positive contributions towards peace and conflict resolution processes have also been recognised and documented by the international community. Consequently, the UN Security Council in its resolution 1325 in 2000 made an urgent call for the "equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security", and emphasised "the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution".

3.10 Against this background, the 6WAMM in Delhi (2000) recommended that "the Commonwealth take action in collaboration with other international organisations and civil society to include women at the highest levels of peace-building, peacekeeping, conflict mediation, resolution, and post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction activities". They encouraged a 30 per cent target of women's participation in peace initiatives by the year 2005. As part of its assistance to countries experiencing conflict, the Secretariat held a Sierra Leone national consultation on 'Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction' in May 2001, following a decade of armed conflict that led to the virtual collapse of the country's social, economic, legal and political fabric. The consultation provided a platform for Sierra Leoneans to share their experiences and views, and define their own solutions so that women, men and young persons could work together to create a more democratic, equitable and prosperous future.

3.11 The challenge now is to push beyond numbers and demonstrate the impact of women's contribution to democracy and peace in member countries; promote accountability for international legal frameworks that governments have ratified; domesticate international standards in national constitutions and legislations as tools for promoting de-facto equality; encourage political parties to adopt the 30 per cent target for women candidates; and ensure women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction processes. In line with the Commonwealth's comparative advantage, there is need to develop peace education curricula and promote a culture of peace, geared particularly towards young people, to ensure sustainability.

3.12 Consequently, activities in this critical area will focus on:

- i. Supporting the adoption, ratification, implementation and monitoring of legal frameworks related to democracy, peace and conflict.
- ii. Strengthening democratic and political systems through achievement of the Commonwealth target of at least 30 per cent of women in decision-making in the political, public and private sectors.
- iii. Mainstreaming gender equality into early warning mechanisms, conflict prevention and resolution, peace agreements, peace-building, reconciliation, post-conflict reconstruction, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes.
- iv. Promoting capacity building and strengthening partnerships between governments, NWMs, civil society and regional and international bodies in the promotion of gender equality.
- v. Ensuring the collection of sex-disaggregated data and integrating gender analysis into policy-making, planning and programme implementation in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- vi. Documenting and disseminating good practice in gender-sensitive initiatives in the area of democracy, peace and conflict.

3.13 ***Governments are encouraged to take action to:***

- i. Increase women's representation to a minimum of 30 per cent in parliament and local government in accordance with the Commonwealth's target, through women-specific quotas and affirmative action where necessary to redress existing inequalities and create an enabling environment for women (including young women) to seek and advance political careers.
- ii. Review the criteria and processes for appointment to decision-making bodies in the public and private sectors to encourage increased women's participation and representation.
- iii. Encourage political parties to adopt and reserve a 30 per cent target for women candidates as part of their manifestos and provide leadership training for women.
- iv. Review communications policies and media information to ensure that discriminatory and/or derogatory images and remarks about women in politics and public life are eliminated.
- v. Ban the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.
- vi. Involve women in formal and informal peace agreements and negotiations.

- vii. Ratify legal instruments, and ensure that national legal frameworks promote and protect women's human rights, and provide redress for survivors of armed conflict, particularly women and girls.
- viii. Mainstream gender equality into the training of peacekeepers and into codes of conduct.
- ix. Promote and support the work of the Special Tribunals,¹⁰ and ensure that where crimes are committed in situations of armed conflict, all perpetrators are prosecuted, both state and non-state actors.
- x. Address the specific needs of women, men and young persons in conflict situations, especially those of child soldiers, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people with disabilities.
- xi. Provide adequate medical, financial and psycho-social assistance and care for women and men, including culturally sensitive counselling to survivors of rape, sexual assault and other violations.
- xii. In post-conflict situations, implement effective disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants.
- xiii. Promote assistance in mine clearance, and support efforts to co-ordinate a common response programme of assistance in de-mining without unnecessary discrimination.¹¹
- xiv. Develop peace and citizenship education programmes (including in conflict situations) that promote tolerance and respect for individual rights and freedoms, diversity including religious and cultural diversity, and pluralism.
- xv. Collect and monitor sex-disaggregated data to inform early warning mechanisms and conflict intervention programmes.

3.14 ***The Secretariat will take action to:***

- i. Assist governments, NWMs, political parties, civil society and other partners to achieve the Commonwealth target of 30 per cent for women's representation in the political, public and private sectors.
- ii. Support legislative reviews, policies and programmes that guarantee equal opportunities and treatment to women and men in all sectors and at all levels, including women-specific measures such as quotas and affirmative action policies.
- iii. Support leadership and other capacity-building programmes to enable women (including young women) to seek political office and advance political careers.
- iv. Provide policy advice and technical assistance to countries in mainstreaming gender equality at all stages of the peace process, including conflict prevention and resolution, peace agreements, peace-building, peacekeeping, reconciliation, post-conflict reconstruction, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes.
- v. Support member countries' ratification and implementation of legal frameworks that promote and protect human rights, including women's rights, and redress violations in conflict and post-conflict situations.

¹⁰ The Special Tribunals referred to are the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

¹¹ Beijing Platform for Action, paragraph 143(e) (iii-iv). New York: United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 1995.

- vi. Support the development of peace and citizenship education (including in conflict situations) as part of school curricula, to promote and foster a culture of peace.
- vii. Collaborate with governments, NWMs and other partners to document and disseminate good practice in the area of gender, democracy, peace and conflict.

II Gender, human rights and law

3.15 The Commonwealth asserts its commitment to promoting a rights-based approach in all areas of its work. In issues related to gender equality and human rights, international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW are the primary instruments by which states parties have a duty to guarantee equality of rights between women and men. This framework is reinforced by provisions in national constitutions and statutes, as well as regional treaties and instruments. In addition, other critical international or regional human rights instruments and monitoring bodies, which embed and extend these rights,¹² must also be recognised as key instruments for moving forward the gender-based rights agenda and integrating it into policies and programmes at all levels.

3.16 Although 49 Commonwealth countries have ratified CEDAW and 15 have ratified its Optional Protocol, there are still significant gaps in implementation. Many countries have ratified with reservations. The lack of a gender perspective in the administration of the law has stymied gains made in international and regional treaties and conventions. Even where sound legislation exists, application and interpretation of these laws are inadequate for many reasons: lack of political will, lack of trained judiciaries, lack of enforcement capacity, traditional or customary systems of law that discriminate against women, women's inadequate awareness or legal literacy concerning their rights and recourse to justice, limited human and financial resources for gender-sensitive monitoring and enforcement at national, local and community levels, and inadequate evidence-based data collection. It is in this context that the human rights of women and girls continue to be widely violated.

3.17 Women and girls experience different forms of discrimination and disadvantage at different stages in the life cycle. Even before birth, girls may be denied the right to life through genetic selection; as children, they may be denied the right to an education because of poverty and household responsibilities. As girls mature, their sexuality and sexual identity may conflict with their society's legal, social or religious views about sex, marriage and childbearing. In the labour market, women's work has lower value, status and remuneration than men's; women and girls are more vulnerable to exploitation; and, together with men, women experience increasing discrimination in older age. In order to ensure that progress and gains made at one stage in the life cycle are not negated by

¹² For example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and the four key gender-related ILO Conventions (C100 on equal remuneration, C111 on freedom from discrimination at work, C156 on workers with family responsibilities and C183 on maternity protection).

adverse experiences and discrimination later, adequate support needs to be given to enable transitions from one phase of life to another.

3.18 Customary laws, practices and traditions often have greater significance and value for people in their daily lives than the established statutory and constitutional laws in a country. In addressing gender equality and human rights issues, it is critical to recognise the complex ways in which identity, values and behaviour are formed and regulated at household and community level, often being shaped by elders, traditional leaders or religious institutions. Universal human rights and specific cultural values and traditions have largely been viewed as opposed rather than complementary, and would benefit from greater dialogue about how they might relate to each other. It is now critical to focus attention on the opportunities for changing gender relations in communities by working in partnership with traditional, cultural and religious institutions and leaders in all cultures.

3.19 In the area of customary and traditional laws and practice, many women and girls are subject to customary law under which they have no right to own or inherit land or property; and they may face coercive, unwanted or harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage, 'honour killings' and widow inheritance. It is therefore critical that opportunities are sought for dialogue and engagement with religious, cultural, traditional institutions and custodians to address women's human rights in all cultures and promote harmonisation of statutory and customary law, where appropriate.

3.20 Gender-based violence remains one of the most intransigent forms of human rights violation because of its complex and varied causes and forms. The right to freedom from gender-based violence will only be effectively realised in the context of increased social, political and economic freedoms and rights for both women and men. There are clear links between gender-based violence and many other factors, such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, property and land rights, race/ethnicity, age and sexual orientation, and effective strategies to address gender-based violence need to recognise the full range of discrimination and prejudice in which it is perpetrated. Approaches to gender-based violence have often failed to recognise the special predicament of widows. There is evidence that widows of all ages are abused through traditional practices which include discrimination in inheritance and property ownership. In the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, honour killings are life-threatening. This situation is immeasurably compounded by conflict which has not only increased the number of widows worldwide, but renders them and their children more vulnerable to violations of their rights. Integrated approaches undertaken by all relevant agencies are required, underpinned by comprehensive laws and policies, monitoring and enforcement systems, and mechanisms to ensure accountability for implementation.

3.21 The rapid growth of trafficking in persons is causing increasing global concern. Many of those most exploited and subjected to slavery-like situations are women and girls. It is widely acknowledged that the root causes of this trafficking lie in issues of migration and labour market failings, in which gender inequality and women's poverty are significant elements. However, it is important to recognise clearly the distinctions between trafficking, smuggling and regular and irregular migration, and to ensure that solutions and strategies appropriate to each context are found. Anti-trafficking

legislation must embrace a human rights approach and protect the rights of those most vulnerable to abuse,

3.22 Indigenous peoples, particularly women, continue to be marginalised and disadvantaged in comparison to other groups in society, and face significantly greater poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. There has been a lack of recognition of their rights in many countries, despite acknowledgement of the history of colonialism and its role in the marginalisation of indigenous peoples in the CHOGM Lusaka Declaration of 1979.

3.23 Respect for land and property rights is fundamental to the realisation of human rights and gender equality. Despite constitutional and legal guarantees in many Commonwealth countries prohibiting discrimination against women with regard to ownership of, access to or inheritance of land and property, de facto discrimination persists.

3.24 Consequently, activities in this critical area will focus on:

- i. Legislative and constitutional reform, judicial capacity building and strengthening of mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and accountability.
- ii. Culture, the law and human rights, including rights regarding access to and ownership of land and property.
- iii. Gender-based violence, integrated with work on trafficking in persons (especially women and girls), conflict resolution, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction.
- iv. Indigenous peoples' rights, with a focus on indigenous women and girls.
- v. Gender and human rights throughout the life cycle, addressing discrimination and opportunities at all stages of life and ensuring the maintenance of rights from one stage to another, linked with the achievement of the MDGs and poverty reduction strategies.

3.25 ***Governments are encouraged to take action to:***

- i. Recognise, ratify and implement international and regional human rights instruments that promote gender equality.
- ii. Promote gender-aware legal and constitutional reform and strengthen the knowledge and capacity of the judiciary, parliament and local authorities on gender equality and rights issues.
- iii. Promote active dialogue and engagement between the judiciary and religious, cultural, traditional and community-based institutions and leaders, to address women's human rights at all levels.
- iv. Adopt an integrated, zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence, including strengthening of the law, provision of adequate institutional and financial support to address the needs of survivors, and rehabilitation of perpetrators.
- v. Promote appropriate laws and policies against trafficking in women and children, including the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking

- in Women and Children, and develop plans and strategies to give effect to this protocol at the national level.
- vi. Foster and develop national, local and regional programmes of action with indigenous peoples, particularly women, in accordance with international human rights standards and Commonwealth values on development, democracy and good governance.
 - vii. Promote the maintenance of gender-related rights throughout the life cycle, through the fulfilment of commitments made in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and related regional plans of action and implementation strategies.
 - viii.** Ensure that women's rights to land, housing, property and inheritance are promoted and protected, having recourse to relevant international and national instruments on human rights and poverty reduction.

3.45 *The Secretariat will support member countries by:*

- i. Working with governments to develop appropriate laws and policies for the promotion and protection of women's human rights.
- ii. Documenting case studies of good practice that address customary laws and practices that promote the rights of women and girls; examples of dialogue and synergy between customary systems and constitutional and statutory institutions; and good practices in gender-sensitive land reform processes.
- iii. Providing training on the elimination of gender-based violence, using integrated approaches, and promoting the sharing of good practice at all levels.
- iv. Supporting governments in the development of national plans and strategies to implement the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Women and Children.
- v. Promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, especially women, in political, social, economic and cultural spheres.

III Gender and economic empowerment

3.27 As has been noted earlier (see 2.7), the Commonwealth contains a sizeable proportion of the world's poor. It is now universally accepted that poverty is not only based on lack of income but is also intrinsically linked to lack of access to political, economic, social, natural and cultural resources. This results in the lack of entitlements and opportunities, and social exclusion, that can be based on gender, class, caste or other forms of marginalisation. Gender inequality causes and exacerbates the impact of poverty on women, who globally account for about 70 per cent of the poor. The BPFA and the Beijing+5 Outcome Document identified women's persistent and increasing burdens of poverty and unequal access to resources as critical areas of concern. It is clear that in order to achieve the MDGs, the pro-poor policies that are adopted must necessarily be pro-women. While no specific gender target has been attached to the first goal, indicators with economic implications relate to the expansion of women's waged employment in the non-agricultural sector (goal 2) and security of land tenure (goal 7).

3.28 While globalisation and trade liberalisation offer new opportunities for economic growth and poverty reduction, they also pose critical challenges related to loss of livelihoods and employment for both women and men, with women generally being more severely affected. Economic restructuring and high levels of debt, conflict, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation also constrain the ability of many countries to meet the challenges of poverty reduction. Macroeconomic policies do not take into account the unpaid work that women contribute to the care economy or the unequal recognition and valuation of the contribution of women and men to production and social reproduction. They also focus predominantly on the formal economy, whereas women constitute the majority of workers in the informal economy, estimated to represent 45-80 per cent of all non-agricultural employment. Legal and regulatory frameworks have insufficiently taken into account women's rights. Lack of access to power and decision-making, education and training, and economic resources, especially land and credit, and the absence of social protection increase women's vulnerability.

3.29 In order to achieve poverty reduction, enhancing women's capabilities is of critical importance. Four out of five countries with the largest number of children not in school are Commonwealth countries, and there are at least eight countries where less than 40 per cent of girls are enrolled in schools. When girls are enrolled, their levels of retention, completion and achievement are often much lower than boys. Gender disparities are also evident in increasing levels of underachievement among boys, particularly in the Caribbean, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and parts of the Pacific. Women's health, including women and girl's sexual and reproductive rights and maternal mortality, are also priority issues and impact on the ability of women to develop sustainable livelihoods. Attention also needs to be paid to the maintenance of good health services and, in some Commonwealth countries, to reducing the migration of critical health personnel, including nurses and doctors.

3.30 Many Commonwealth developing countries cannot achieve economic growth because of their debt burden. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative seeks to provide debt relief and offers opportunities for some reallocation of scarce resources for priority social expenditures, particularly in health and education. The Secretariat is in the process of mainstreaming gender equality through the debt management advisory services that it provides to governments and through its Debt Recording and Management System, which it has successfully introduced to over 50 countries.

3.31 The prevalent market-access focus of trade policies and liberalisation, and assumptions regarding the 'gender neutral' character of the processes of globalisation and trade liberalisation agreements, have often obscured their impacts on gender relations, poverty reduction and human development. Since women shoulder the primary responsibility for household and community management, their paid and unpaid work, their overall time burden and even their health are directly affected by trade policies. Policies regarding export and import affect women as producers and consumers in different ways than men. Increased cutbacks by governments lead to reduced investment and expenditures in the social sectors, resulting in reduced access to basic services and social protection and causing food insecurity.

3.32 It is therefore important not only to enhance the negotiating capacity of Commonwealth developing countries so that they can play a key role in setting the agenda and can benefit from trade negotiations, but also to ensure that gender analysis becomes part of the process of developing trade policies and negotiations. In view of gender-differentiated access to resources and the gendered division of labour, the differential impacts on women and men of measures undertaken must be taken into account. In this context, it is important not only that gender perspectives are mainstreamed into trade agreements but also that women participate meaningfully in the negotiations towards just and fair trading agreements and systems.

3.33 Gender-responsive budget (GRB) analysis is increasingly becoming a tool for managing critical governance issues and for assessing the impact of economic policies on women. The GRB initiative, developed by the Secretariat in collaboration with partners such as IDRC, UNIFEM, UNDP and OECD, has been an invaluable instrument in encouraging governments to apply gender analysis to the expenditure side of their national budgetary process. Twenty-three Commonwealth countries¹³ have put in place some form of gender budget analysis, and initiatives are emerging in many others. In addition to giving much greater attention to the revenue side of budgets, the next phase of GRB work will focus on processes to mainstream and monitor gender budget analysis in specific Commonwealth countries to ensure that these efforts are institutionalised.

3.34 In order to effectively address the processes of the feminisation of both labour and poverty, the Commonwealth will broaden its approach to gender and economic empowerment to encompass the macro-, meso- and micro-levels as a continuum. At the macroeconomic level, this means building on and institutionalising initiatives to mainstream gender-sensitive approaches across critical areas related to the formulation of fiscal and trade policies, and policies related to enterprise and agricultural development. At the meso-level, the main thrust of Commonwealth activity will relate to the creation of an enabling environment for women workers, both self-employed and wage-employed, in the agricultural and non-agricultural areas, and influencing poverty reduction strategies and programmes. At the micro-level there needs to be focused attention on increasing access to resources of all kinds for women: natural, material, financial and technological. These would result in enhanced well-being and economic empowerment and would be manifested in food security, sustainable livelihoods, social protection and more and better employment opportunities.

3.35 An enabling environment includes the establishment of appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure workers' rights and adherence to core labour standards, and the adoption of appropriate social protection measures to mitigate the risks and vulnerability faced by women workers, including migrants. Women whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, forestry or fisheries need to be equipped with appropriate technical skills and backward and forward linkages. Other key factors to enable women to respond to the world economy as workers and entrepreneurs include

¹³ Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Canada, Fiji Islands, India, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, St Kitts and Nevis, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom and Zambia. See *Building on Achievements: Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its Update (2000-2005)*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003.

increased access to social, economic and natural productive resources, including land and capital; appropriate skills development; and access to markets and to knowledge and information, including ICTs. Facilitating the organisation and networking of women can play a key role in their ability to make their voices heard at local, national, regional and international levels. Statistical and data collection systems need to enhance the visibility and valuation of women's paid and unpaid work.

3.36 Consequently, activities in this critical area will focus on:

- i. Influencing fiscal, trade, and labour policies for the implementation of GRBs, the engendering of multilateral trade processes and the improvement of women workers' conditions and rights; and influencing sectoral policies in areas that would enhance women's livelihoods, such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry by improving women's access to productive resources, markets, skills and extension services.
- ii. Facilitating the creation of an enabling environment for women workers, including by establishing frameworks for core labour standards, social protection, the identification and development of appropriate skills, and promoting women's organisations and networking.
- iii. Mainstreaming gender equality into programmes and processes related to poverty reduction, the MDGs, PRSPs, SWApS, etc., and working to enhance women's access to and control over productive and natural resources.

3.37 ***Governments are encouraged to take action to:***

- i. Ensure that fiscal, trade and general macroeconomic policies are designed to promote women's economic empowerment and do not cause adverse gender impacts.
- ii. Promote the application and extension of GRB processes, and integration of gender analysis in trade negotiations.
- iii. Develop and enforce labour policies and standards that take into account women in the informal economy, and also ensure that their needs and interests are met in the policies of all relevant ministries.
- iv.*** Promote policies and strategies, and ensure the enrolment and retention of girls in primary and secondary schools, the improvement of school curricula and the quality of education to meet the relevant MDGs and indicators.
- v. Develop, amend and implement laws to ensure equal rights to productive resources (e.g. land, property and credit) for women and men, and enhance women's access to and control over natural resources (e.g. water and forests) in order to create sustainable livelihoods and food security.
- vi. Develop equitable social protection systems to deal with risk and vulnerability caused by poverty, sickness, maternity, disasters, loss of employment, etc.
- vii. Involve women actively in the development of macroeconomic policies, programmes and implementation strategies (MDG strategies, trade agreements, national budgets); integrate gender analysis and gender equality provisions into all PRSPs and other poverty reduction strategies; and set up consultative teams that include women and pro-poor CSOs to monitor the gender equality provisions these contain.

- viii. Provide gender-sensitive agricultural (dairy, forestry and fisheries) services and credit, including micro-credit to women farmers and entrepreneurs.
- ix. Develop programmes to meet women's needs for appropriate skills and technology and facilitate marketing and credit linkages, especially for marginalised and vulnerable categories of women, such as migrants and own-account workers.
- x. Support women's entrepreneurship and provide an enabling environment for business development at all levels.
- xi. Facilitate the organisation and networking of women's groups.
- xii. Improve statistical systems to make women's paid and unpaid work visible and valued.

3.38 *The Secretariat will support member countries by:*

- i. Undertaking capacity-building for NWMs, trade, finance and other ministries and government agencies, and CSOs, in order to mainstream gender analysis in the macroeconomic framework.
- ii. Developing the methodology and tools for extending gender analysis of budgets to the revenue side, and working in specific countries to institutionalise GRB processes.
- iii. Continuing its advocacy for gender analysis in international, regional and national trade negotiations, and providing assistance to governments in negotiating gender-sensitive international trading agreements.
- iv. Developing guidelines and handbooks for issues related to social protection and workers rights, and providing technical assistance to specific countries.
- v. Fostering links between women entrepreneurs at all levels, including grassroots women producers, e.g. through the Commonwealth Business Women's Network (CBWN).
- vi. Providing advice to and enhancing the capacity of governments to increase the enrolment and retention of girls in the educational system and improve the quality of education.
- vii. Promoting good practice on infant and maternal mortality through the development and dissemination of case studies.
- viii. Working to develop a model Commonwealth Code of Conduct for regulating the migration of skilled health personnel.
- ix. Promoting South-South and North-South dialogue for capacity development, information and knowledge sharing, and disseminating good practice on specific issues (e.g. migration, retention of girls in school).
- x. Working, in the context of specific countries, to introduce gender-sensitive strategies for agriculture and export competitiveness.

IV Gender and HIV/AIDS

3.39 The UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS¹⁴ gave international recognition to the critical need to tackle gender inequality, which lies at the heart of

¹⁴ Adopted at the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2001.

vulnerability to and the impact of HIV/AIDS. International, regional and national responses to HIV/AIDS increasingly acknowledge that women and girls are hardest hit by the pandemic.

3.40 HIV/AIDS has reached crisis proportions in Sub-Saharan Africa, is increasing dramatically in the Caribbean and Asia, and has enormous implications for small states. At their Abuja meeting in 2003, Commonwealth Heads of Government highlighted its devastating impact. They recognised the fundamental importance of confronting the pandemic if their countries are to meet the MDGs. Two-thirds of the five million people who became infected with HIV in 2003 were Commonwealth citizens. HIV/AIDS affects primarily people of working age, and in the most severely affected countries it is decimating the human resources necessary to sustain social and economic growth.

3.41 Poverty and gender inequalities are driving factors in the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS. Women's inferior political and legal status perpetuates poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunity in social, economic and cultural spheres of activity, including access to and ownership of land and property, inheritance rights and decent work opportunities. In this context, women and girls, faced with the need to support their families, often feel they have little choice but to engage in sex work or in transactional sex (sex for food, rent, clothing, bus fare), which makes them even more vulnerable to HIV infection.

3.42 Women also bear the brunt of the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS. Women of all ages, especially older women, very young women and adolescent girls, bear unsustainable burdens of care for the sick and dying in their homes, face additional health-care costs for HIV-affected family members, and in many cases cope with extra dependants such as orphans. Research has shown that up to 90 per cent of HIV care is provided in the home. In some cases, over 43 per cent of total household labour is lost to AIDS-affected households because of care responsibilities.

3.43 In a number of countries, there are growing numbers of child/orphan-headed households containing children with few prospects for education, socialisation or economic opportunities as they grow up. At the end of 2001, 11 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 15 had lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. It is expected that by 2010, there will be 20 million AIDS orphans in this age group.

3.44 Women and girls are more susceptible to contracting HIV not only for biological reasons but because they lack the power to negotiate safe sex or refuse unwanted sex. Gender-based violence, particularly rape, is both a cause and consequence of HIV transmission. The high incidence of violence and forced sex experienced by women, as well as their abandonment or eviction from their homes and communities when they are HIV positive, create enormous difficulties for women who lack economic means or alternatives. Illiteracy, lack of information or educational opportunities and inappropriate prevention messages further exacerbate the vulnerability of women and girls to infection. It is critical to increase opportunities and create an enabling environment for women and girls to be empowered to make choices and informed decisions over their lives and relationships in the home, workplace and community.

3.45 Further, in over-crowded urban as well as rural areas, basic health and social services are grossly inadequate, especially in terms of treatment of opportunistic infections, voluntary testing and counselling facilities, anti-retroviral treatment and social and family service support. Even where support exists, many women and men are not aware of the services available to them at local and community levels.

3.46 Lack of availability and access to female-controlled prevention methods are a critical factor in the increasing infection rate among women and girls. Women are twice as likely as men to contract HIV from a single act of unprotected sex, but they remain dependent on male co-operation to protect themselves from infection. Greater attention needs to be paid to research and investment in microbicides, improving the female condom, and exploring other forms of female-controlled prevention.

3.47 While many policies and commitments made by governments and international organisations make the connection between gender and HIV/AIDS explicit, these commitments are not always implemented. Some examples of good practice are emerging, but there is often a big gap between policy and practice because of insufficient resources, training and capacity, especially where public sectors and basic service provision have been cut back. There is a need for greater attention to be paid to the implementation of policies and commitments, and for increased monitoring of and accountability for service delivery on the part of multilateral institutions, governments and CSOs.

3.48 The PoA supports and strengthens implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS agreed at the UN General Assembly Special Session in 2001. These commitments, targets and strategies include the empowerment of women as a strategy for reducing their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and alleviating the social and economic impact of the disease on women and girls. The PoA also carries forward the emphasis on women-controlled methods of prevention highlighted in the Communiqué from Commonwealth Health Ministers to CHOGM in Abuja (2003).

3.49 Consequently, activities in this critical area will focus on:

- i. Mainstreaming gender equality into multisectoral, national, regional and international programmes on HIV/AIDS.
- ii. Promoting partnerships between women and men to reduce the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS.
- iii. Strengthening institutional partnerships to support the implementation of effective strategies to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and address the social and economic impact of the pandemic, in particular on women and girls.
- iv. Preventing new HIV infections among young people, particularly girls and young women, through support and promotion of the Commonwealth Youth Ambassadors for Positive Living Initiative.

3.50 ***Governments are encouraged to take action to:***

- i. Strengthen gender mainstreaming in multisectoral HIV/AIDS policies and programmes.
- ii. Promote the increased availability of female-controlled methods of preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

- iii. Intensify and expand awareness programmes on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, including strategies to empower women and girls to refuse unsafe or unwanted sex, and promote the involvement of men and boys in HIV/AIDS programmes and strategies.
- iv. Ensure equal access and adequate provision of treatment, care and support for men and women.
- v. Develop measures to address the specific needs of HIV/AIDS infected and affected women, including care-givers and those at risk of infection through gender-based violence and poverty.
- vi. Introduce community programmes that promote dialogue and partnership between women and men on the prevention of HIV/AIDS.
- vii. Mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on human resources in the public service and strengthen capacity building in this area in the public sector.
- viii. Protect the rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS, and take urgent measures to address stigma and discrimination.
- ix. Take legal, social and economic measures to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS.

3.51 *The Secretariat will support member countries by:*

- i. Providing advice and technical assistance in the development and implementation of gender-sensitive, multisectoral HIV/AIDS policies and programmes.
- ii. Developing gender-sensitive training and resource materials for use in public awareness programmes, focusing on young people in particular.
- iii. Facilitating the sharing of gender-sensitive strategies and good practice for reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS.
- iv. Promoting, strengthening and expanding the Commonwealth Youth Ambassadors for Positive Living Initiative across the Commonwealth.
- v. Ensuring that the Commonwealth participates actively in international, regional and national bodies and networks, and strengthens its strategic partnerships to enhance effective implementation of gender-sensitive responses to HIV/AIDS.

4 IMPLEMENTING THE PoA

4.1 This section focuses on how Commonwealth governments and the Secretariat will seek to implement the gender mainstreaming approach outlined in the four critical areas above.

Partnerships

4.2 A key feature of the Secretariat is its status as a trusted partner of member countries, enabling it to establish dynamic and sustainable partnerships between governments and other stakeholders. Partnership building is a vital strategy in mainstreaming gender equality for the following reasons:

- i. Collaboration with governments and other partners minimises overlaps and duplication of effort, fosters greater coherence of approaches and programmes, facilitates monitoring based on agreed targets and appropriate gender indicators, and ensures cost-effectiveness.
- ii. Governments can benefit from the capacity and experience of CSOs in addressing political, legal, economic, social and cultural gender equality issues.
- iii. Groups such as CSOs, the media and the private sector are able to provide alternative approaches to government policies, lobby governments to take action on special issues, monitor government action on critical matters and provide additional resources and expertise in specialist fields.
- iv. The media and cultural organisations are powerful agencies in raising public awareness and promoting changes in attitude on gender issues. They can provide positive images of women, promote gender-sensitive reporting and highlight the critical role of men as change agents.
- v. Partnerships with international, regional and other agencies provide an important mechanism for the wider dissemination of knowledge, information, experience and good practice.

4.3 The Secretariat will strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones, particularly with stakeholders who have expertise and experience in the four critical areas of the PoA. Partners include:

- i. Commonwealth governments;
- ii. Commonwealth inter-governmental organisations: the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL);
- iii. Commonwealth associations, e.g. CPA, CLGF, CMJA, CBWN and CGF (see Appendix V);
- iv. universities, public service training institutions and other tertiary educational institutions;
- v. CSOs in the widest sense;
- vi. the private sector;
- vii. the media; and
- viii. international organisations including the UN and its agencies, other multilateral agencies including the major financial and trade institutions, regional bodies (see Appendix VI) and bilateral agencies.

4.4 Men and young people are essential partners in mainstreaming gender equality, and it is critical that the Commonwealth engage actively with organisations that work with men and young people on gender equality issues.

4.5 The Secretariat will promote a Commonwealth voice on gender equality and mainstreaming, through strengthening its advocacy, brokering and catalytic role with member governments and other partners at the national, regional and international levels.

Knowledge, information and capacity building

4.6 Generating new knowledge and information sharing are two of the Commonwealth's strengths. The Secretariat will continue to contribute to the global body of information, documenting and disseminating good practice on gender equality and mainstreaming to inform the development of gender-aware policies, plans and programmes. The Secretariat will explore enhanced ways of delivering learner-centred and training-oriented materials, including via information and communications technologies (ICTs) and distance-education, as a strategy for reaching a wider audience.

4.7 Through its gender website, the Secretariat's Knowledge-Based Network (KBN) will continue to provide current information and resource materials for policy-makers, parliamentarians, local councillors, women's organisations, activists and others. This will be complemented by the STPD newsletter, *Link-In to Education, Gender and Health*. Gender policy briefs for Commonwealth ministerial meetings and selected global conferences will also keep Commonwealth women and men in touch with key issues, and provide relevant information for lobbying for the inclusion of gender issues at such meetings.

4.8 NWMs will continue to receive information and policy advice on gender issues through the Secretariat's dedicated electronic Help-Desk. This also responds to requests for information to support capacity-building needs at national, regional and international levels. Governments are encouraged to provide NWMs and other gender change agents with leadership and negotiating skills to enhance their gender mainstreaming role and enable them to better influence national policy-making.

4.9 The Secretariat, in collaboration with its partners, will provide capacity-building programmes in the four critical areas of the PoA for NWMs and other key partners, including ministries of finance, planning and trade, parliamentarians, the judiciary, universities, public service training institutions, the private sector and CSOs. It will also organise national, regional, pan-Commonwealth and international consultations and workshops for sharing experiences and good practice, building capacity, and developing new tools and methodologies.

4.10 Gender training programmes are essential in universities, public service training institutions and other tertiary institutions, and a gender perspective needs to be integrated into all training and capacity-building programmes for the public service, particularly at senior managerial, professional and administrative levels. The Secretariat will work with COL, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) and other partners to support governments' efforts to institutionalise gender training programmes.

4.11 At the request of member governments, the Secretariat will undertake policy advisory missions on the application of Commonwealth tools and methodologies to national situations, e.g. GMS, GRBs and the integrated approach to gender-based violence, and field short- and long-term gender experts.

4.12 Governments are encouraged to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data for policy, planning and implementation processes.

4.13 In many Commonwealth countries, optimal use of ICTs for poverty reduction through advocacy and capacity building has not been possible. Women in general, and particularly those in rural communities, tend to have less access to ICTs and skills training than men and young people. Bridging the 'gender digital divide' for women and girls through more effective use of mobile telephones, the Internet, e-mails, websites, CD-ROMs and other e-materials, should be encouraged.

Resources

4.14 Adequate financial, human and technological resources are essential for effective implementation of the PoA. Promoting equality between women and men is not the sole responsibility of Women's/Gender Affairs Ministries, but of all institutions in society including the state system, private sector and civil society. All Ministries should ensure that their budgets allocate adequate resources to provide equal opportunities and benefits for women/girls and men/boys.

4.15 Increased donor support is necessary for member countries to invest more in health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation and other key components of infrastructure that are critical for poverty reduction and enhancing growth. Gender equality remains central in all these areas.

4.16 Governments need to take a multisectoral approach to key development issues facing member countries (such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, and post-conflict reconstruction).

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

4.17 Governments should establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating national and sectoral budget allocation and expenditure. The gender impacts of PRSPs, pro-poor and rural development initiatives, public sector reforms, and other national and sector programmes should also be closely monitored and evaluated.

4.18 The Secretariat's reporting on the implementation of the PoA will be harmonised with CEDAW and BPFA processes as far as possible, in order to reduce the burden of reporting on NWMs and to avoid duplication.

4.19 The Secretary-General will continue to report on the implementation of the PoA to Heads of Government at their biennial summits and to senior officials' meetings. Reports will be based on information provided by governments and the Secretariat.¹⁵ In keeping with the partnership approach to the implementation of the PoA, governments

¹⁵ Questionnaires to be completed by governments for the report will be harmonised with UN reporting processes, and will be supplemented by reports prepared for other purposes such as CEDAW. The information supplied will also be used to produce publications and training materials.

will compile their reports in consultation with CSOs, and the Secretariat will report on its co-operation with partners.

4.20 The Secretariat will integrate monitoring of the PoA into its 4-year strategic planning and 2-year operational planning cycles. The positioning of gender equality and equity as a cross-cutting theme in the 2004-2008 Strategic Plan is expected to increase the gender impacts of the Secretariat's programmes on development and democracy in all member countries and regions. Gender audits of the Secretariat's work will be undertaken to assess its impact in promoting equality between women and men in the Commonwealth.

4.21 Commonwealth Women's/Gender Affairs Ministers will meet periodically to review the progress made by governments and the Secretariat in implementing the PoA, share experiences, discuss lessons learned and consider new and emerging gender issues. Ministers will make recommendations to Heads of Government for more effective implementation of the PoA. Recognising the need for cost-effectiveness, Ministers will make increasing use of opportunities for consultation offered by ICTs, and the possibility of meeting in the wings of other regional and global meetings. In this context, Heads of NWMs will be encouraged to meet during annual meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. A Commonwealth Gender Reference Group, consisting of a rotating core of NWMs and representatives of CSOs from all the regions, will be established to assist with monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the PoA.

4.22 This PoA provides the framework for Commonwealth action on gender equality in the decade ahead. It forms part of the Commonwealth's contribution to the Beijing+10 Global Review in 2005 and complements the global Millennium Development Compact that has been launched with specific, time-bound and quantifiable goals and targets. The Commonwealth family of developed and developing countries, reflecting both diversity and common values, must build on its strengths and resources to contribute to an equal world for women, men and young people.

ACRONYMS

ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAPAM	Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management
CBWN	Commonwealth Business Women's Network
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CMAG	Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	civil society organisation
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GMS	Gender Management System
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budget
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
ICTs	information and communications technologies
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	internally displaced person
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KBN	(Commonwealth) Knowledge-Based Network
LDCs	least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NWMs	national women's machineries
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser for Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women
PoA	(Commonwealth) Plan of Action
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STPD	Social Transformation Programmes Division (Commonwealth Secretariat)
SWAps	sector wide approaches
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAW	UN Division for the Advancement of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Human Rights
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WAMM	(Commonwealth) Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs Meeting
WHO	World Health Organization

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)

At the UN General Assembly in 2000, Heads of State and Government took stock of the gross inequalities in human development worldwide and recognised “their collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity [and] equality at the global level”.

In addition to declaring their support for freedom, democracy and human rights, they set eight goals for development and poverty eradication, to be achieved by 2015, with targets and indicators to assess progress in implementation. The goals are to:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

**THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN
OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BPFA)**

- A Women and poverty
- B Education and training of women
- C Women and health
- D Violence against women
- E Women and armed conflict
- F Women and the economy
- G Women in power and decision-making
- H Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I Human rights of women
- J Women and the media
- K Women and the environment
- L The girl-child

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO HUMAN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The four Geneva Conventions (1949) and Additional Protocols (1977)
- The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1951)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966)
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1966)
- The Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergencies and Armed Conflicts (1974)
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979) and Optional Protocol (1999)
- The UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and Optional Protocols (2000)
- The Vienna Declaration (1993)
- The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)
- The Statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (UNSC Resolution 827) (1993)
- The Statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (UNSC Resolution 955) (1994)
- The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) (1995)
- The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (1997)
- The Special Court for Sierra Leone (UNSC Resolution 1315) (2000)
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)
- General Assembly (A/56/863): Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (Brahimi Report) (2000)
- The Windhoek Declaration (Namibian Plan of Action) (2000)
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2003)
- UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/58/241 on Illicit Arms and Light Weapons (2003)

Commonwealth/ Regional Conventions

- The European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (1981)
- The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (1995)

- The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) and its Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children (1998)
- The African Charter on the Rights of the Child (1999)
- The Commonwealth Victoria Falls Declaration of Principles for Promoting the Human Rights of Women (1994); Hong Kong Conclusions (1996); and Georgetown Recommendations and Strategies for Action on the Human Rights of Women and the Girl Child (1997)

THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT'S MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS AND PROGRAMME AREAS IN THE 2004-2008 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

GOALS

Goal 1: To support member countries to prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democracy 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.

Goal 1 (Peace and Democracy) will be achieved through 4 programmes:

- Good Offices for Peace
- Democracy
- Rule of Law
- Human Rights

Goal 2 (Pro-Poor Growth and Sustainable Development) will be achieved through 9 programmes:

- International Trade
- Investment
- Finance and Debt
- Public Sector Development
- Environmentally Sustainable Development
- Small States
- Education
- Health
- Young People

These programmes will be supported by 3 cross-cutting programmes:

- Gender Equality and Equity
- Capacity Building and Institutional Development

- Secretariat Governance, Management and Communications

COMMONWEALTH INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

- Commonwealth Secretariat
- Commonwealth Foundation
- Commonwealth of Learning

COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATIONS

- Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Record Managers
- Association of Commonwealth Universities
- British Commonwealth Ex-Services League
- Commonwealth Association of Architects
- Commonwealth Association for Mental Handicap and Development Disabilities
- Commonwealth Association of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition
- Commonwealth Association of Planners
- Commonwealth Association of Scientific Agricultural Societies
- Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy
- Commonwealth Broadcasting Association
- Commonwealth Business Council
- Commonwealth Business Women's Network
- Commonwealth Countries League
- Commonwealth Dental Association
- Commonwealth Engineers Council
- Commonwealth Games Federation
- Commonwealth Geographical Bureau
- Commonwealth Group of Family Planning Associations
- Commonwealth Institute
- Commonwealth Jewish Council
- Commonwealth Journalists Association
- Commonwealth Forestry Association
- Commonwealth Forum for Project Management
- Commonwealth Human Ecology Council
- Commonwealth Lawyers Association
- Commonwealth Legal Advisory Service
- Commonwealth Legal Education Association
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum
- Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association
- Commonwealth Medical Association Trust
- Commonwealth Nurses Federation
- Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
- Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association

- Commonwealth Press Union
- Commonwealth Relations Trust
- Commonwealth Society for the Deaf-Sound Seekers
- Commonwealth Trade Union Council
- Commonwealth Veterinary Association
- Commonwealth Women's NGO Network
- Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council
- Conference of Commonwealth Auditors General
- Conference of Commonwealth Meteorologists
- Council for Education in the Commonwealth
- Disabled People International Commonwealth Committee to DPI/Europe
- English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth
- Institute of Commonwealth Studies
- League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers
- Organisation of Commonwealth United Nations Associations
- Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth
- Royal Commonwealth Society
- Royal Over-Seas League
- Sight Savers International (the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind)
- Soroptimist International Commonwealth Group
- Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship

REGIONAL BODIES

- African Union (AU)
- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
- Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (ForSec)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC)
- Southern African Development Community (SADC)

**COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT PUBLICATIONS
ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING
IN KEY SECTORS/DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

The GMS Toolkit: An Integrated Resource for Implementing the Gender Management System Series (2004); ISBN 0-85092-784-4

Engendering Budgets: A Practitioners' Guide to Understanding and Implementing Gender-Responsive Budgets (2003); ISBN 0-85092-735-8

Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals (2003); ISBN 0-85092-752-8

Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trading System (2003); ISBN 0-85092-736-6

Integrated Approaches to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence (2003); non-sale publication

Gender Budgets Make Cents (2002); ISBN: 0-85092-696-3

Gender Budgets Make More Cents (2002); ISBN: 0-85092-734-X

Gender Mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS (2002); ISBN 0-85092-655-6

Promoting an Integrated Approach to Combat Gender-Based Violence: A Training Manual (2002); ISBN: 0-85092-714-5

Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture and Rural Development (2001); ISBN: 0-85092-606-8

Gender Mainstreaming in Legal and Constitutional Affairs (2001); ISBN: 0-85092-653-X

Gender Mainstreaming in Science and Technology (2001); ISBN: 0-85092-654-8

Gender Mainstreaming in Information and Communications (2000); ISBN: 0-85092-602-5

Gender Mainstreaming in Trade and Industry (2000); ISBN: 0-85092-604-1

Gender Equality and the Judiciary (1999); ISBN 0-85092-577-0

Gender Mainstreaming in Development Planning (1999); ISBN: 0-85092-592-4

Gender Mainstreaming in Education (1999); ISBN: 0-85092-598-3

Gender Mainstreaming in Finance (1999); ISBN: 0-85092-600-9

Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Service (1999); ISBN: 0-85092-596-7

Gender Management Systems Handbook (1999); ISBN: 0-85092-590-8

Guidelines for Police Training on Violence Against Women and Child Sexual Abuse, 2nd ed. (1999); ISBN: 0-85092-576-2

How to do Gender-Sensitive Budget Analysis: Contemporary Research and Practice (1999); ISBN: 0-86803-615-3

Using Gender-Sensitive Indicators (1999); ISBN: 0-85092-594-0

Women in Politics: Voices from the Commonwealth (1999); ISBN 0-85092-569-X

Advancing the Human Rights of Women (1997); ISBN: 0-85092-515-0

A Manual for the Africa Region: Women and Natural Resource Management (1996); ISBN: 0-85092-465-0

A Manual for the South Pacific Region: Women and Natural Resource Management (1996); ISBN: 0-85092-464-2

Gender Bias in School Textbooks (1995); ISBN: 0-85092-446-4

Women in Business (1994); ISBN: 0-85092-404-9

Entrepreneurial Skills for Young Women: A Manual for Trainers (1992); ISBN: 0-85092-428-6