

# Foreword

## Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Ransford Smith



I am delighted to launch *Commonwealth Good Governance 2011/12*. It is produced by the Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD), with articles contributed by our staff and by leading governance experts from some of our key partner development institutions. This year, the theme directly addresses the two core pillars of the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat – democracy and development – and demonstrates the importance of fair and effective public administration to delivering on both.

The issues raised in this publication matter greatly to the Commonwealth's future. As a diverse family of 54 developed and developing nations, spread across every region of the globe, the Commonwealth is home to 2.13 billion people, representing almost a third of the world's

population. Commonwealth members constitute more than a quarter of the membership of the United Nations, nearly 40 per cent of the World Trade Organization, more than a third of the membership of the Organization of American States, just under 40 per cent of the African Union, 60 per cent of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation, around 90 per cent of the Caribbean Community and the Pacific Islands Forum, and over 20 per cent of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

But perhaps the most telling piece of data is that 63 per cent of the world's poor live in Commonwealth countries. Developing Commonwealth countries suffer particularly high rates of deprivation, with 47 per cent of their population living in poverty compared to only 32 per cent in non-Commonwealth countries. Among developing Commonwealth countries, 12 are low-income countries, and 31 are middle-income countries – where 72 per cent of the world's poor are now to be found.

Development therefore matters, but so equally does democracy, both as an intrinsic value but also for promoting sustainable development. Fortunately, thanks to the Commonwealth's shared tradition of democracy, common law and public administration, Commonwealth member countries, as reflected in several surveys and studies, are generally doing comparatively better than their global counterparts in effective governance. For example, according to the World Bank's World Governance Indicators, the Commonwealth average score is positive on all six areas it monitors.

Tackling poverty reduction and other national and international development goals requires delivering both effective democracy and sustainable development. This year's *Commonwealth Good Governance* shows how the Commonwealth Secretariat is working with member countries to build the fair and effective public administration within the *Just and Honest Government* framework that is essential for both democracy and development.