

Introduction

Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma



The topics covered in this year's *Commonwealth Good Governance* are fundamental to the vision of the Commonwealth and to the practical action we take collectively so that the lives of citizens in all our member countries are continuously changed for the better.

In its report to Heads of Government at their 2011 meeting in Perth, Australia, the Eminent Persons Group, composed of independent Commonwealth personalities, offered options that would sharpen the impact, strengthen the networks and raise the profile of the Commonwealth. This

was a landmark in the continuing process of renewing our commitment, raising our ambition and refocusing our work.

Referring to the core value of *Good Governance* in their 2009 Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles, Heads of Government reiterated their 'commitment to promote the rule of law, ensure transparency and accountability and root out, both at national and international levels, systemic and systematic corruption'.

Just and Honest Government – that is, effective public institutions, clear-sighted and ethical political leadership, and capable and fair public administration – is of critical importance. This is because it is fair and effective public administration that makes the state legitimate in the eyes of its citizens. The Commonwealth's shared tradition of public administration is therefore an enormously valuable asset. The articles in this title show this feature of our work at the Commonwealth Secretariat to be central in promoting democracy, development and diversity. And each of these elements is essential in working towards the goal set in the theme chosen for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2011 – 'Building National Resilience, Building Global Resilience'.

We can even achieve greater impact and boost resilience through our work on public administration. This is an area where the Commonwealth, as a membership organisation, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, as a trusted partner, have much to offer. An example is the success of our regular retreats bringing together cabinet ministers and top civil servants. These occasions quietly build the trust between the political and administrative leadership in member countries on which progress towards democracy, development and respect for diversity depend.

I commend this publication to you.