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# Foreword

In 1996, the Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs mandated the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop the concept of the Gender Management System (GMS), a holistic system-wide approach to bringing a gender perspective to bear in the mainstream of all government policies, plans and programmes. The success of the GMS depends on a broad-based partnership in society in which government consults and acts co-operatively with other key stakeholders, who include civil society and the private sector. The task of gender mainstreaming has both technical and managerial dimensions, as well as the political and socio-cultural aspects of creating equality and equity between women and men as partners in the quest for social justice. The establishment and strengthening of gender management systems and of national women's machineries was identified in the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development.

To assist member governments in meeting their commitment to implementing the Plan of Action, the Commonwealth Secretariat has produced an 11-volume series of GMS Manuals that focus on specific sectors, from agriculture to trade and industry. The conceptual and methodological framework of the GMS is presented in the *Gender Management System Handbook*. This Manual on HIV/AIDS is the first in a new series on gender mainstreaming in critical multisectoral development issues. It is hoped that it will be used by development policy-makers, planners, field staff and others, in conjunction with other publications relating to particular national contexts. It is intended that the Manual should serve as an accessible reference manual to aid users in setting up a GMS and managing problems encountered in advancing the goal of gender equality and equity in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic from a multisectoral perspective.

The development of the GMS series has been a collective effort between the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender and Youth Affairs Division and many individuals and groups. Their contributions to the thinking behind the GMS are gratefully acknowledged. In particular, I would like to thank the following:

all those member governments who supported the development of the GMS and encouraged us to move the project forward; participants at the first GMS meeting in Britain in February 1996 and at the GMS Workshop in Malta in April 1998, who provided valuable input and feedback; and the Steering Committee on the Plan of Action (SCOPA). The concept for this specific co-publication on Gender Mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS arose during a Commonwealth Secretariat GMS and Health Sector Workshop in Halifax, Canada in November 1999. In accordance with the spirit and principles of a broad-based partnership, the Canadian partners and Commonwealth Secretariat jointly identified the need for a dynamic publication to enhance the capacity of governments to adopt gender-based principles in the campaign against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

I am most grateful to Dr Carol Amaratunga and the Canadian editorial team, Dr Jacqueline Gahagan and Sandra Bentley, for their contributions to the text of this manual; to the Canadian authors; to Tina Johnson, Contributing Editor; to members of the Guest Editorial Committee; and to the staff of the Gender Affairs Department, Gender and Youth Affairs Division, particularly Dr Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, GMS Series Co-ordinator, who conceptualised and guided the series through to publication. I also wish to acknowledge the significant contribution of The Women's Health Bureau, Health Canada in enabling this co-publication and in contributing a number of key resources, supporting case studies and partnership funding.

We share a common commitment to reducing the incidence and suffering caused by HIV/AIDS around the world and hope that this Manual will be of genuine use to you in your efforts to mainstream gender in this area.

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