

## Foreword by the Commonwealth Secretary-General

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Commonwealth countries are dispersed as broadly along the spectrum of economic development as they are geographically. Just over a quarter, 14 in a membership of 53, are classified as least developed countries (LDCs). Some, as a result of social and economic progress, will soon begin the transition from this category. We celebrate with them the development gains achieved, yet recognise that support will be needed through the graduation process.

Not all development partners offer graduation support programmes, even though adverse impacts are likely to be encountered during transition – as a result, for example, of losing trade preference. Substantially increased market costs have to be borne, while infrastructure and economy remain extremely susceptible to environmental shocks and the existential threat of climate change. Regardless of progress against broad economic and social indicators, vulnerabilities tend to persist, threatening to set back achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The guidance offered in this publication draws on research into *‘Least Developed Country Transition’* undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat in preparation for the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, funded by the UK government. The research was guided by an inter-agency steering committee with representation from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Enhanced Integrated Framework of the World Trade Organization and the City of London.

Our Commonwealth goal is for the fruits of increased prosperity to be enjoyed by all through social and economic development that is inclusive and sustainable. In solidarity and with goodwill, and by building long-term resilience so that vulnerabilities to untoward episodes can be swiftly overcome whenever and wherever they occur, we collaborate to make irreversible progress towards a common future.

**The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC**  
*Secretary-General of the Commonwealth*