

Foreword

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remains disturbingly persistent and pervasive across the Commonwealth and worldwide, and important strands of Commonwealth Secretariat work are directed towards eradicating this scourge. In these, we act in accordance with mandates handed to us by Commonwealth Heads of Government and priorities agreed by our member countries at Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings.

Notable among our contributions is the development of tools to strengthen the capacity of rule-of-law officials in Commonwealth countries. We are greatly assisted in doing so by Commonwealth advantage, which is the product of our shared Common Law inheritances, our shared language, and similar systems of governance and administration.

In June 2016, the *Judicial Bench Book on Violence against Women in Commonwealth East Africa* was launched in Nairobi, Kenya. Among recommendations made by the Judicial Bench Book Technical Working Group of justices and gender experts was that illustrative examples of case law on VAWG should be collated and reviewed. Accordingly, this Case Law Handbook has been developed by judges in East Africa as a contribution towards the development of the jurisprudence of equality.

The aim is to aid propagation and implementation of procedural recommendations and good practices set out in the Judicial Bench Book, and to provide judicial officers and other rule-of-law practitioners with a comprehensive and up-to-date resource on adjudicating matters of VAWG in East African jurisdictions. This publication therefore presents leading cases of relevance to these jurisdictions, and is intended to add to local manuals, guidelines or handbooks that reflect local processes.

We offer this handbook as an encouragement to reflect and learn more about how national and international law can be applied by studying revealing examples of VAWG case law, and by understanding in greater depth procedure, recommended court practice, sentencing and remedies.

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