

# Foreword

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The Commonwealth Secretariat works as a trusted partner for all Commonwealth people as a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance. It is a catalyst for global consensus building and a source of assistance for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Deriving its mandates from the Commonwealth Heads of Government, the Commonwealth Secretariat serves the needs of member governments and their peoples, providing a forum for discussion and collective action and assisting with political, economic and social development.

The Trade Section of the Special Advisory Services Division works towards assisting members to derive greater benefits from the opportunities and challenges provided by globalisation. In responding to requests from Commonwealth developing countries, the Secretariat has provided technical assistance for the development of national export strategy (NES) projects in a number of countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. Between 2005 and 2007, the Secretariat assisted these projects in a successful collaboration with the Geneva-based International Trade Centre.

Our work in this area is based on the premise that strategy development is the starting point for any concerted effort to improve on export performance through increased national competitiveness. Exports can be a powerful driver of economic growth and poverty reduction and therefore the development and implementation of a sustainable national export strategy can assist countries move towards their Millennium Development Goal targets and improve the quality of life for their people.

We have had a very good success rate with our national export strategy projects and shall therefore continue to favourably consider requests for technical assistance from our member countries. We are also pleased to take the opportunity presented through the production of this handbook to share widely the lessons learned in these ventures. It will be an invaluable resource for all those countries planning to develop or already developing a national export strategy.

**Jose Maurel**

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