

Foreword

In pursuing the mandate for Public Sector Development, this study on the contract system of employment for senior government officials in five Pacific Commonwealth countries (Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu) was undertaken by the Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

This publication reviews the effects of the reforms implemented under the ‘new public management’ principles on the roles and conditions of service of permanent secretaries in these countries. The countries introduced the contract system of employment to improve the effectiveness of their public services in promoting national development. Their experiences highlight the importance of acknowledging the political economy context when considering the implications of the contract system, and the political and administrative challenges of implementation.

The results of this study were presented by Omar Mowlana, Adviser, Human Resources Management, at the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) Biennial Conference in Malta in October 2010.

We have completed similar studies in the Caribbean region (Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and St Lucia) and in the Africa region (Botswana, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia). Current research is now being undertaken in the Asia region, and a fourth publication will follow for the benefit of the member countries based on the Asian experiences.

These studies will contribute to a Commonwealth-wide understanding of the effectiveness of the Senior Executive Service (SES) contract system. This will be useful in providing informed policy advice from a Commonwealth perspective on strategic choices, which can be critical to promoting good governance principles and the development of human resource capacity in public services in order to improve public service delivery and in turn the lives of all people, particularly the poor and vulnerable.

I wish to commend Faamausili Dr Matagi alofi Lua’iufi, Dr Taiamoni Pifeleti, Regional Adviser Pacific, and S Omar Z Mowlana, Adviser, Human Resource Management and Leadership Development in GIDD for this initiative.

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