

# Foreword

The East Asian development experience is remarkable by historical standards. Over the last two decades, the four East Asian tigers grew more rapidly than other developing countries and achieved impressive increases in living standards. The region has emerged as a major magnet for world trade and foreign investment. The causes of East Asia's economic success have been hotly debated in policy circles and a plethora of economic, political and social explanations have been offered. International agencies have tried to translate the East Asian experience into policy prescriptions for other developing countries in South Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean with differing rates of success. In an attempt to build a consensus on the factors behind East Asia's success and to formulate best practice lessons for Commonwealth developing countries, the Secretariat asked Professor Robert Cassen to prepare this paper. The principal development issues analysed include: trade and industrial policy, growth, macro-economic strategies, human development and poverty reduction. Drawing on the East Asian experience, the paper proposes an anti-poverty strategy based on three main components: growth, employment and human development. Finally, the paper examines the implications of the anti-poverty strategy for international development co-operation policies in the context of declining aid flows and suggests measures to improve their effectiveness.

The paper was first presented at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting in Jamaica in 1995 and also at a Round Table on Growth and Poverty Alleviation organised by the Economic Affairs Division of the Secretariat in early 1996. This volume contains a revised version of the Professor Cassen's paper, the verbatim comments by discussants at the Round Table, a summary of the discussion by the Secretariat and a list of participants.

Sir Humphrey Maud (KCMG)  
*Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General*  
Economic and Social Affairs