

too: the inheritance of arbitrary borders, the shifting terms of trade against primary-goods, cold war rivalries, the ineffective use of aid to prop up corrupt regimes and stifle reform. We have known for decades why visiting economists fail, but the governance and corruption crises meant that strict conditionality was still seen by many as a necessary evil by donors who didn't support total disengagement.¹³ The record shows that there is no short-cut to success by imposing the 'right answer' from outside – international efforts can only support internal will to reform and help to build the coalitions for it. International organisations now say all of the right things. But servicing them remains costly – donors have promised to coordinate their activities but haven't achieved it. The President of the World Bank admits that "It is shameful that Tanzania must produce 2,400 reports each quarter for its donors".¹⁴

Because many countries do not yet have the opportunity, capacity, infrastructure or policies to compete successfully.

Legitimate and well-intentioned governments face immense challenges in turning their countries around. The burdens of the past can be crippling – and the Commonwealth has played a leading role in getting debt relief moving. It also needs to help its developing and least developed countries get their voices heard in calling for the trade liberalisation that will benefit them in the next WTO round. The Commonwealth's many small states, which are classified mainly as middle-income countries, also want to use the Commonwealth to ensure that their vulnerability is recognised properly by