



The Commonwealth

JOB AND TASK DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Political Officer	Division: Political Division (POL), Caribbean/Pacific Section	Grade: H
Reports to: Head of Caribbean/Pacific Section		

General Information

The Political Division (POL) is the lead division in the Secretariat's high-profile programme for the promotion of democracy and good governance in the Commonwealth. The division works closely with the Secretary-General, providing him with advice and support on all political issues, and particularly in his Good Offices role. Its work ranges from monitoring and analysis of political developments and the preparation of briefings, to the organisation of election observation and the provision of technical assistance. The work is often of great sensitivity and to demanding timetables.

POL is also responsible for organising and servicing the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM), the annual meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers and meetings of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG).

The Caribbean/Pacific Section is responsible for the Commonwealth's political relations with 24 member states in the Caribbean/Americas and the Pacific. It also oversees the relationship with the relevant regional organisations, viz the Caribbean Community and Pacific Islands Forum. Finally, it has responsibility for nurturing the overall relationship with the United Nations in New York, with other POL sections liaising also with relevant partner officials at the UN as needed.

Job Summary

Reporting to the Head of Caribbean/Pacific Section, the Political Officer monitors international developments in the relevant Commonwealth regions and contributes to the development of the Secretariat's policy on political issues in relation to the countries and international organisations in question by way of briefings, advice, recommendations and support to senior staff.

Task Description

The post holder:

- Supports the Head of Caribbean/Pacific Section in managing and co-ordinating the Commonwealth Secretariat's political relationship with the countries and organisations of assigned responsibility in the concerned regions;
- Prepares briefing materials, talking points and background papers for senior management;



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- Coordinates and edits material prepared by other Secretariat divisions for briefing the Secretary-General and other senior Secretariat officers, or for distribution to member governments;
- Carries out in-depth research on a range of international and issues of relevance to the Section, and provides policy advice/recommendations based on such research;
- Supports the Secretary-General and other senior Secretariat officers by accompanying them at high-level meetings and preparing records of discussion;
- Undertakes official travel abroad with senior colleagues or by himself/herself as directed;
- Develops and maintains contacts with relevant organisations, networks and individuals in the regions/countries of assigned responsibility, including attending events and representing the Secretariat in the relevant for a when called upon to do so;
- Assists with the preparation, coordination and conduct of intergovernmental meetings arranged by Political Division;
- Prepares, edits, co-ordinates and disseminates documentation for such meetings;
- Liaises with representatives of High Commissions and other Senior Officials as needed, especially from countries of assigned responsibility;
- Produces records of the outcomes and discussions of such meetings;
- Supports good offices and electoral observer missions, including by preparing briefs, participating in such missions personally and preparing post-assignment reports;
- Represents the Secretariat externally and contributes to strategic partnerships with the United Nations and relevant regional organisations, non-governmental organisations and academic institutions, as may be required;
- Adheres to the Gender Equality values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy; and
- Performs other duties as may be required from time to time.

Person Specification

Education:

Essential: A degree in a relevant subject such as political science or international relations.

Desirable: A postgraduate degree in a relevant subject

Experience:

Essential: Five years' experience in international affairs, preferably in an international organisation or government department with expertise in developing countries, including research and drafting.

Competencies:

Respect for Diversity

Works effectively with people from all backgrounds.
 Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.
 Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.
 Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.
 Changes systems and processes when biases are identified

Working with Others

Promotes team work and removes barriers to effective team working
 Provides advice and guidance for others sensitively and where appropriate
 Establishes ownership for relevant activities from the outset
 Develops a wide network, including senior level contacts to facilitate activities and further own knowledge
 Manages expectations of member states e.g. to ensure the alignment of what is requested and what Commonwealth Secretariat can offer
 Demonstrates an ability to negotiate with and influence senior colleagues and contacts
 Proactively liaises with other divisions, partners & third parties

Managing Resources

Identifies targets for team activities and manages progress against objectives
 Plans and manages activity spend accurately against budget
 Takes responsibility for team activity and finds solutions to set backs in a timely and professional manner
 Effectively motivates team e.g. by recognising and promoting team and individual contribution inter alia
 Recognises strengths and weaknesses in others, structuring teams based on this knowledge
 Drives forward results of others
 Takes ownership for team wellbeing

Decision Making

Considers the relevant justifications for a particular course of action
 Takes context into consideration when making decisions
 Makes effective decisions when acting on behalf of a senior colleague, seeking advice where appropriate
 Bases actions and approaches on the root cause of an issue, rather than the symptoms

Accountability



Takes ownership of assigned tasks, honours deadlines.

Ensures timely delivery of outputs within defined cost and quality standard parameters.

Takes responsibility for own shortcomings and compliances.

Leadership & Development

Mentors colleagues effectively e.g. by suggesting development goals and providing on the job coaching inter alia

Provides constructive feedback to team members and colleagues with confidence and sensitivity

Actively seeks feedback on own performance and acts to modify behaviours where necessary

Inspires others through own enthusiasm