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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the proceedings of a conference at which delegations from 40 Commonwealth countries and 7 dependent territories gathered. The principal theme of the conference was "Improving the Quality of Basic Education." The first part of the report presents the findings of ministerial committees on four theme topics: (1) better schools and better classrooms; (2) better support and services; (3) education beyond formal schooling; and (4) management and resources. The theme of "Higher Education Cooperation" was also addressed, with the ministers devoting particular attention to a proposal for the creation of the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS). This document includes a report of a working party on the Commonwealth of Learning and extracts of a working paper on the Secretariat's Work Programme in Education. The report also includes the texts of seven addresses made to the conference and four appendices: conference agenda, conference timetable, conference documentation, and conference participants. (DB)

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# Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers

## REPORT

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Barbados  
29 October-2 November 1990



Commonwealth Secretariat

**Eleventh Conference  
of  
Commonwealth  
Education Ministers  
REPORT**

Barbados

29 October - 2 November 1990

Commonwealth Secretariat  
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# Foreword

Nineteen ninety will be remembered as a year of special significance for international education. This was International Literacy Year when the world community – developed countries as well as developing – sought to extend to much wider segments of their population opportunities to acquire the skills of literacy. In March, at Jomtien in Thailand, education leaders from all round the globe assembled for the World Conference on "Education for All" and gave a new impetus to the goal of universal access to education at the basic level. In September, the largest-ever gathering of national Heads of State took place in New York, for the World Summit on Children.

The Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Barbados, from 29 October to 2 November 1990, was able to build on these events earlier in the year. Although not pretending to compete in size or in range of international representation with those preceding meetings, it was nevertheless a significant event in its own right bringing together delegations from 40 Commonwealth countries and seven dependent territories, the largest number of delegations ever to participate at a Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference. The principal theme of the Conference – "Improving the Quality of Basic Education" – was of particular topicality and relevance. On the one hand, the international community had been reminded in Jomtien that "Education for All" must mean more than universal access to schooling; it also implies genuine learning achievement by all and this will only be possible if attention is given to the quality of education as well as to its quantitative expansion. On the other hand, in many Commonwealth countries there are increasing signs of restiveness among parents and communities over what are perceived to be inadequate standards in state systems of education and the strong desire everywhere that remedies should be found. Without such improvements, the attainment of education for all will in any case not be possible, since parents and children may vote with their feet, and desert schools and educational programmes.

Ministers identified a number of measures which could be taken at both national and international levels to improve quality and they approved a programme of work for the Commonwealth Secretariat to undertake in co-operation with national governments and international agencies. Acknowledging the centrality of teachers to the improvement of quality they agreed that much of this work would focus on better teacher training, management and support. The Ministers were also mindful of the threat to quality improvement posed by the economic situation which in many countries was deteriorating. Their decision to consult together through the Commonwealth Secretariat on ways to limit the harmful effect of adjustment policies on the quality of basic education; on the creation of a more constructive dialogue between the education and finance authorities; and on ways to promote international dialogue concerning these issues, will surely prove helpful as countries endeavour to realise the hopes generated at Jomtien.

The second major theme of the Conference was Higher Education Co-operation and at this level of the education system too, the need to improve quality was underscored. In recent years the shortage of resources and the pressure from growing numbers of secondary leavers for admission had eroded the capacity of higher education institutions in developing countries to contribute to human resource development as effectively as their governments and their peoples would expect and wish. The challenge to Ministers was to

mobilise Commonwealth bilateral and multilateral efforts to strengthen higher education management, staff development and books, materials and library provision. In response, Ministers decided to carry forward new collaborative initiatives and endorse the creation of a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS). The scheme is both timely and exciting in the possibilities for joint endeavour that it opens up.

The Secretariat, in collaboration with partner agencies, will now endeavour to translate this potential into practical schemes of co-operation under CHESS with the aim of being able to report substantial progress when Commonwealth Heads of Government meet in Harare this year. Heads will also be invited to consider once again a subject which continues to cause great anguish to education ministers: the stagnation of intra-Commonwealth student mobility and the many impediments, financial and otherwise, to its growth. In directing that, in consultation with major host countries, I should explore the scope and modalities of introducing a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students, Ministers were mindful of the contribution which increased mobility could make to the personal growth and education of individuals, to the development of their countries and national education systems, and to the strength and vitality of the Commonwealth association.

In making a reality of CHESS, Commonwealth countries will draw encouragement from the example of The Commonwealth of Learning which has itself been brought to fruition in the short space of time that has elapsed since the Tenth Conference in Nairobi in 1987. Ministers welcomed the creation of the new institution and the progress that had been achieved so far. Distance education techniques have much to offer in raising the quality of both basic and higher education, as well as in improving and extending education and training at other levels, and of other kinds.

As Commonwealth Heads of Government now review the future roles of the Commonwealth in the 1990s and beyond they will take encouragement from the positive themes that emerged from the Barbados Conference. These confirm the present vitality of education links, and underscore the future potential of education co-operation in contributing to sustainable national and international development as well as in strengthening the fabric of the Commonwealth itself.

A large, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. J. A. ...". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.



# Conference Communiqué

1 The Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers was held at the Dover Convention Centre, Barbados, from 29 October to 2 November 1990. It was opened by the Rt Hon. L Erskine Sandiford, Prime Minister of Barbados, and was chaired by the Barbados Minister of Education and Culture, the Hon. Cyril Walker.

2 Delegations from 40 countries attended the Conference – the largest number ever to have been present at a Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference. They included Namibia and Pakistan which had become members of the Commonwealth since the last Conference held in Kenya in 1987. Forty Ministers attended, of whom 31 were heads of delegation. There were 15 Commonwealth and international organisations present as observers. For the first time The Commonwealth of Learning, established in 1988, was represented at the Conference.

3 In welcoming Namibia's entry to the Commonwealth, Ministers recognised that country's urgent and wide-ranging requirements for educational assistance from her Commonwealth partners. Commonwealth Ministers pledged themselves to respond both on a bilateral basis and through joint Commonwealth schemes. Special efforts would be made through the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, the newly approved Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme, and The Commonwealth of Learning to provide tangible assistance to human resource development in Namibia.

4 Ministers expressed satisfaction at the growth of educational co-operation, consultation and links at various levels within the Commonwealth in the 31 years since the first Conference was held in 1959. They reaffirmed the special value their governments placed on continuing educational co-operation and interchange within the Commonwealth and expressed their resolve to sustain and enhance them.

5 The Conference took as its principal theme **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**. Ministers also devoted particular attention to the proposal for the establishment of the **Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme** whose purpose was to help raise the quality of universities and colleges in member countries.

## Improving the Quality of Basic Education

6 Ministers recognised that, while the quantitative expansion of education throughout the Commonwealth during the last 25 years had been impressive, concerns remained about its quality, more especially at the basic level. They reviewed measures that could be adopted even within tight financial limits in order to raise quality. In doing so they endorsed the **World Declaration on Education for All** issued at Jomtien in March 1990 and noted the initial steps taken at national and international level to develop plans and strategies for achieving its goals.

7 Progress towards reaching the objectives set at Jomtien would depend mainly on countries' own efforts but the success of these would be largely determined by developments in the international economic environment. Many countries throughout the Commonwealth faced severe economic pressures caused by their international indebtedness. Structural adjustment policies, often introduced under agreements with international financial bodies, gave little room for manoeuvre in designing programmes to

improve educational quality at the basic level. There was a need for dialogue on these issues both at the national level between ministries of education and ministries of finance, and internationally by Commonwealth Education Ministers with the major international agencies including the International Monetary Fund. It was urgent to explore how vital investments in the improved quality of basic education could be protected in the course of structural adjustment. The Commonwealth Secretariat was asked to take appropriate follow-up action to bring about a dialogue of this kind.

8 The constraints on both capital and current expenditure on education gave urgency to the search for measures to improve cost-effectiveness including the effective deployment of teachers. A realistic strategy to raise the quality of basic education also required, however, some redistribution of budgetary resources in favour of basic education, the harnessing of government and community resources, and the targeting of aid to support basic education.

9 Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to protect and maintain quantitative progress made over past decades, which had seen a large majority of young children enter school. They noted that the idea of quality of education could be problematic, but recognised a number of factors that provided common ground for defining the concept of quality. They agreed that the quality of all education was concerned with such things as relevance to the child, the family and society, effectiveness and efficiency, and the promotion of equity in society in general.

10 Ministers further noted that quality was relative, not absolute. All policy makers and planners wishing to improve education need to give the idea of quality concrete form. To assist this process and to monitor it, there were merits in designing and selecting a range of measurable indicators of quality while recognising that many attributes of good education do not easily lend themselves to quantification.

11 Ministers agreed that the means of bringing about improvements were many and complex but they reaffirmed their belief that schools were pivotal in achieving qualitative reforms. They wanted to see measures to increase the involvement of parents and local communities in the search for better education. They reaffirmed the crucial role of management in implementing cost-effective measures at both school and system-wide levels. They therefore stressed the importance of providing support and devising appropriate training for teachers, including headteachers, to implement these reforms.

12 Ministers were convinced that teachers were central to improving quality and therefore recognised the increasing importance of better teacher management and support. Well-prepared and motivated teaching services were essential for effective teaching and learning. While policy makers could initiate change in the educational structure, the curriculum and administration, it was the teachers who had the greatest impact on learning. Measures were therefore required to enhance and strengthen the capacity of teachers in order to improve educational outcomes; specifically, better conditions of service must be seriously addressed.

13 Given the severe problems that have so far hampered the translation of these ideals into concrete action, Ministers recommended that the Secretariat should continue to investigate country experience in the area of teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, and to identify innovative strategies that focused attention on both the instructional role of teachers and their role as managers of learning resources. Information should be disseminated about successful practices in Commonwealth countries for enhancing the status and morale of teachers and about programmes directed at the upgrading of teacher educators.

14 Ministers stressed the importance of measures to raise the quality of education through national and regional programmes including expert group meetings, provision of consultants, local and international, reviews of experience, the production of manuals and the exchange of personnel. In particular, special attention should be paid to building up national expertise on consultancy autonomy. Where possible, the Secretariat's activities should be planned in partnership with regional, Commonwealth and international agencies both to extend the resource base for joint activities, and to ensure its work

complemented that of other agencies. Regular consultation and information exchange with individual countries and the international community would, it was hoped, maintain the momentum of interest and attention in the improvement of basic education.

### **Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS)**

15 Ministers considered the Report of a Commonwealth Expert Group, **Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS): Strengthening Capacity for Sustainable Development**, which was presented to them by the Group's Chairman, Professor James Downey until recently President of the University of New Brunswick. Ministers endorsed the Expert Group's identification of the higher education sector's pressing needs, satisfaction of which was vital if quality was to be raised. They agreed that there were many points at which local resources needed to be supplemented and complemented by assistance from abroad. Important additional benefits would accrue from collective action by Commonwealth bilateral and multilateral agencies working together in concert with their developing country partners and existing mechanisms for regional co-operation.

16 Ministers endorsed the Expert Group's recommendations that a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS) should be established. Support should initially be concentrated in the three areas identified by the Standing Committee as being central to the improvement of quality in higher education: books, materials and libraries; improved systems of management in institutions and systems of higher education; and staff development. The proposal for CHESS envisaged no new agency being created, nor should there be any special Fund. Commonwealth support for higher education development could be articulated by combining, where appropriate, assistance available through bilateral and multilateral channels within a new framework of common purposes, collective commitments and joint programmes.

17 What was now needed was to identify dependable sources of bilateral and multilateral assistance for CHESS programmes, to agree the mechanisms for tapping this assistance, to consider further the modalities of operations identified by the Expert Group, and to assign co-ordinating responsibility for the projects envisaged under CHESS. Education Ministers charged a second CHESS planning meeting, to be held in the next six months, with responsibility for addressing these questions and for developing more substantial projects for implementation in 1991/92.

### **Commonwealth Student Mobility**

18 In reviewing Commonwealth student mobility, Ministers benefited from an opening address by Sir Roy Marshall, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation. They reaffirmed their conviction that such interchange was vital for the health and vigour of Commonwealth political, institutional, commercial and professional links. Ministers considered information on the latest trends in mobility and noted with concern the continuing stagnation of student mobility among Commonwealth countries, a situation that contrasted sharply with the general increase of mobility from and to non-Commonwealth countries. The continuance of such trends would seriously erode the foundations on which the Commonwealth association rested.

19 High levels of tuition fees and the method of setting those fees in some of the host countries constituted a major impediment to expanding mobility and were an insurmountable obstacle for many individuals. Where the fees applying to overseas students were expected to cover full cost, it was important that a fair and reasonable basis for arriving at these costs should be established. The view was expressed that account should be taken of the contribution that students from abroad made to an institution's academic life and to its research programmes.

20 Ministers noted that since their last Conference, Australia and New Zealand had introduced full-cost fees for Commonwealth students. They expressed appreciation of India's stance, the only major host country which uniformly charged low and non-discriminatory fees to students from abroad, and of those Canadian provinces which charged the same fees to domestic students as those from abroad.

21 Ministers urged the principal host countries to exercise restraint in fees and to give concrete expression to their joint pledge in Nairobi in 1987 to consider a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students. It was apparent that within the context of the European Community the principle of applying favourable rates of fee to certain categories of students had already been conceded for some groups coming from abroad, and the view was expressed that the possibility of similar arrangements in the Commonwealth should be considered. Some host countries described direct and indirect benefits to Commonwealth students which are available to offset fees. Ministers noted that it was incumbent on them to respond to the request of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Kuala Lumpur that they consider how the downward trends in Commonwealth student mobility might be reversed and they requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the major host countries, to explore the scope and modalities of introducing a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students and the mechanisms, financial and administrative, for making it operative. Mindful of the importance of this question for the future of the Commonwealth, which Heads of Governments would be reviewing at Harare in late 1991, Ministers asked that a report should be presented to Commonwealth Heads of Government at Harare. Student mobility should remain within the terms of reference of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation.

22 Governments were urged to increase the number of scholarship awards offered for the direct support of intra-Commonwealth student mobility: Australia's decision to use funds previously allocated to fee subsidies for new and expanded programmes of awards was noted as a means of counterbalancing the unfavourable effects of high fees. Ministers also took cognisance of Britain's increased spending on overseas student support and the desire of a number of Canadian universities to increase the flow of students from countries that traditionally sent few of them to Canada.

23 There was also agreement to work towards strategies lessening the burden of overseas study and enhancing its effectiveness to sending nations by initiating credit transfer, modular course structures, links and split-site arrangements between institutions, as well as distance education programmes and facilities. These arrangements should be genuine partnerships based on principles of equality and mutual advantage, but in some cases elements of commercialisation and profit motivation were tending to distort the purposes of such programmes.

24 Ministers attached importance to the diversification of Commonwealth flows through more member countries becoming hosts to students from abroad. A number of developing countries expressed their willingness to receive greater numbers of students from other Commonwealth countries in spite of the heavy domestic pressure of demand from home students. Ministers noted with pleasure a statement to this effect on behalf of Zimbabwe. The burden would be eased if reciprocal arrangements between such countries were in place. There was also a need for practical steps to encourage student mobility among developing Commonwealth countries, and from the more developed countries to developing ones. The strengthening of higher education infrastructure in developing countries to facilitate the hosting of students from abroad was one way to approach this problem and CHES would contribute to this. It was recognised that governments of developing countries had a responsibility for expanding the inflow of students from abroad and for encouraging their own students to study in other Commonwealth developing countries; external assistance could play a very useful role in supporting such exchanges.

25 Ministers recommended that the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation should retain its present designation but its functions should be enlarged to include responsibilities for monitoring and reviewing the progress of CHES. It should report on these at appropriate intervals to Ministers and Heads of Government. The Committee members should continue to be men and women of distinction appointed in a personal capacity, thus retaining the Committee's role as a source of independent advice and ideas; but provision should be made to associate major donor governments and other donor agencies with the Committee's work, on a basis that did not jeopardise its independence.



## **Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan**

26 Ministers received with appreciation the report of the working party on the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, noting with regret the decrease of about 15 per cent in the number of CSFP awards taken up since the last conference three years ago in Nairobi and agreeing to the report's principal recommendation that a third ten-year review committee be convened by the Secretary-General to review the Plan and suggest ways it might be further improved as it enters its fourth decade.

## **The Commonwealth of Learning**

27 Ministers noted with pleasure that, since their last meeting, The Commonwealth of Learning had been established by Commonwealth governments and had become operational. They received and endorsed the first report ever submitted to Ministers as required under the Memorandum of Understanding and also unanimously approved the recommendations submitted to them by a Conference working party established to consider The Commonwealth of Learning report. The working party was chaired by Hon. Bakary Dabo, Vice-President and Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture of The Gambia.

28 Ministers congratulated the new organisation on the commendable progress made since becoming operational in January 1989 and the strides it had made towards widening access to education and raising its quality through distance education. They welcomed the extensive range of activities which had been launched in such areas as staff training, the exchange of educational materials, telecommunications, institutional development and information services. They noted with satisfaction the particular emphasis The Commonwealth of Learning had placed on professional education, teacher training, the environment and women in development. They noted, too, the important role which COL had to play in advocacy for distance education and for international co-operation in its use. Every effort should be made to strengthen national and regional institutions, and to facilitate the sharing of their expertise.

29 Recalling that a major factor in the decision to establish COL was the existence of a wealth of high-quality distance-teaching materials within the Commonwealth, the shared use of which would contribute significantly to the process of human resource development, they strongly supported measures to encourage and facilitate the flow of materials between Commonwealth countries, including arrangements to make materials available at marginal cost where this proved possible. In this context Ministers noted the proposal from India for a materials bank and asked that its feasibility should be examined.

30 The establishment of The Commonwealth of Learning had been made possible by the foresight and commitment of governments in pledging funds for its initial five-year period. Ministers welcomed the pledges that had already been made, and the funds already remitted and urged countries which had not so far pledged or contributed funds to do so soon. They noted with appreciation Kenya's pledge of £50,000. They acknowledged that in some cases, and especially in small states, there were serious limits to the level of contribution that could realistically be made. Nevertheless they emphasised the importance and the symbolic value of pledging even modest amounts in demonstrating to major donors, and to the Commonwealth as a whole, a commitment to COL's aims and objectives. Ministers agreed on the need for an increase in COL's core budget and greater flexibility in the use of ear-marked funds. They advised that Heads of Government at their meeting in Harare in 1991 would need to address the question of a new tranche of funds for The Commonwealth of Learning's second quinquennium.

31 Ministers endorsed the recommendation of the recent conference of Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs that The Commonwealth of Learning should submit a regular report to that meeting.

32 Ministers approved a recommendation of the Board of COL that regionally appointed Board Members should retire in the following sequence: Malta to retire in December 1990; Australia and Barbados to retire in December 1991; Zimbabwe to retire in December 1992.

In order to provide for the replacement of these Board members, meetings were held on a regional basis within the framework of the Conference. Ministers noted that the Asia and Mediterranean region had nominated Sri Lanka to appoint a Board member to serve a three-year term of office from January 1991 and that the African region had nominated Uganda to do likewise from January 1993. In the case of the Caribbean and the Pacific, Ministers agreed that consultations between member countries on the choice of a country from each of these two regions to appoint a Board member from January 1992 would continue and that the results of these consultations would be communicated to the Board of The Commonwealth of Learning. In the case of the Pacific, the COL Board would co-ordinate the process.

### **Work of the Commonwealth Secretariat in Education**

33 Ministers expressed their appreciation of the programme of work on education undertaken by the Secretariat since the Tenth Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers. Work on co-operation in higher education, distance education, developing entrepreneurial skills, teacher management, science, technology and mathematics education and educational development in small states had been well received in member countries. It was gratifying that so much had been achieved with limited resources.

34 Ministers recognised the advantages of planning the Secretariat's programme of work in education on a medium-term plan basis. They approved the principle of a costed five-year rolling plan starting in 1990 and recommended the Twelfth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers should monitor progress on the basis of an evaluation report from the Secretariat and consider the balance of activities within the plan as appropriate.

35 Ministers were of the view that the Commonwealth Secretariat's Education Programme should focus on a small number of manageable activities in which the Secretariat could demonstrate comparative advantage. Higher education co-operation should continue as a major concern of the Programme, especially the development of CHES. Improving the quality of basic education for both children and adults – the theme of 11 CCEM – should provide a second area of focus. Ministers identified support of the professional development of teachers and teacher education as being themes of particular importance concerning efforts to improve the quality of basic education. The Secretariat's work on educational development in small states should continue.

36 Ministers looked forward to the outcome of the High-Level Appraisal Group on the Commonwealth in the 1990s and Beyond and placed on record their hope that the centrality of co-operation in education to Commonwealth relationships, and the scope for broadening and deepening Commonwealth educational links, would be recognised in the Group's findings.

37 Ministers expressed their gratitude to the Government and people of Barbados for the excellent arrangements made for their Conference and the warmth of hospitality they had received.

38 Ministers agreed to hold their next meeting in 1993.

# Conference Arrangements

## Background

The Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers was held at the Dover Convention Centre in Barbados from 29 October to 2 November 1990. It was attended by 190 delegates from 40 countries and seven dependencies. Forty Ministers were present of whom 31 were heads of delegation. Fifteen Commonwealth and other international organisations were represented.

The 1990 Barbados Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers was the eleventh in the series which began at Oxford in 1959 and continued at New Delhi (1962), Ottawa (1964), Lagos (1968), Canberra (1971), Kingston (1974), Accra (1977), Colombo (1980), Nicosia (1984), and Nairobi (1987).

## Preparations

At the close of the Nairobi Conference, the Government of Barbados offered to be host in 1990. Member states subsequently agreed that the Conference should be held from 29 October to 2 November, and should be preceded by the customary meetings of senior officials on 28 October.

On 26 January 1990 the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Shridath Ramphal, wrote to education ministers outlining the Conference programme, and inviting them to lead their national delegations in Barbados. Letters of invitation were also sent to 17 international organisations to participate as observers.

## The Conference Programme

The main theme of the Conference, **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**, was agreed in consultation with governments and the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee in London. To assist Conference deliberations, Commonwealth education ministries were asked to contribute country papers. Guidelines for their preparation were sent to education ministries on 7 February 1990. In all, country papers were received from 48 countries, and these formed the basis of a series of Conference documents relating to the main theme, including a background paper on the issues, an overview of Commonwealth experience, and, by the end of the Conference, ten volumes of country papers.

Conference preparations were undertaken jointly by the Government of Barbados and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Director of the Secretariat's Education Programme, Mr Peter Williams, served as Conference Secretary and Mr W Peter Dunne as Conference Officer. On the Barbadian side the Conference Co-Secretary was Mr V Carlyle Carter, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Culture, who also chaired an inter-ministerial committee responsible for the local planning and management of the Conference. The Co-ordinator of the Barbados Task Force was Ms Mabel Chandler, Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The format of the Conference agenda followed precedent. In outline, three working parties were established by senior officials, meeting immediately prior to the Conference, to consider the work programme in education of the Commonwealth Secretariat, arrange-

ments for the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, and the first two years of operation of The Commonwealth of Learning, which was present at the Conference for the first time. The Conference was opened on Monday 29 October by the Prime Minister of Barbados, Rt Hon. L Erskine Sandiford and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Hon. Kazi Zafar Ahmed who spoke at the opening ceremony. Following the election by acclamation of the Hon. Cyril Walker, Minister of Education and Culture, Barbados, as Conference Chairman, Ministers, senior officials and observers spent three days in plenary and ministerial committee sessions. The Conference agenda included consideration of the main conference theme, improving the quality of basic education. It carried forward the international debate on quality in education highlighted earlier in the year at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand. Other important agenda items were higher education co-operation (including proposals for the establishment of a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme, student mobility, and the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan), The Commonwealth of Learning, and the Secretariat's work programme in education.

On the fourth day, the Conference broke to allow Ministers to visit educational institutions in Barbados, and to hold informal consultations among themselves. The final day of the Conference was devoted to approving the reports of ministerial sessions and senior officials' working parties and agreeing the Conference communique.

In adjourning, the Ministers of Education of Nigeria and Seychelles spoke for their fellow Ministers in expressing gratitude and appreciation for the exceptional hospitality afforded by the Government of Barbados.



# Conference Proceedings

## Improving the Quality of Basic Education

1.01 Deliberations on the main Conference theme were initiated by the Hon. Fay Chung, Minister of Education and Culture in Zimbabwe. In the first of two keynote addresses she stressed the inextricable linkage between quality and quantity in education. Equity of access to education is a characteristic feature of quality education. Education for all, with specific and targeted provision for disadvantaged groups, is attainable if innovative approaches are adopted.

1.02 At the heart of quality education is the status, role and motivation of teachers. Governments are aware that better trained teachers are costly but it is possible to achieve a judicious mix of highly qualified professionals with para-professionals within the school. Citing the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course, and the Associate Teacher Programme, reference was made to innovative teacher training programmes designed to train cadres of highly qualified professionals and para-professionals.

1.03 The Minister noted that St Lucia had identified twelve performance indicators which could be ordered under four categories. The first, comprising philosophy, policies and goals give direction and unity to professionals and parents who share a mutual enterprise. Second, staff welfare and staff development considerations are fundamental to staff morale. Third, an efficiently planned and managed infrastructure is required which provides supervision, co-ordination and administrative support. Fourth, community support is the sine qua non for making real gains in quality in schools.

1.04 To these four categories the speaker added relevant, centrally-devised curricula which should meet both local and national needs, linking with post-school employment opportunities. Teachers themselves need to be involved in the evolution of appropriate curricula, along with university teachers and researchers, examination and curriculum specialists, education officers and teacher trainers. Without real local ownership of the curriculum, reform might be more apparent than real.

1.05 In extending education provision, non-formal education has the potential to be innovative and cost-effective.

1.06 The Minister concluded by appealing to the Commonwealth Secretariat, and international development programmes generally, to support national and regional experts and institutions so as to achieve greater local autonomy in research and consultancies related to educational reform. It is a widely-held view in many Third World countries that a large proportion of the technical assistance to developing countries is in the form of high pay for First World experts. Strengthening local expertise and institutions would pave the way for sustainable local development in the long-term.

1.07 The second keynote address was given by the Hon. Comrade Deryck Bernard, Minister of Education, Guyana. He emphasised the causative link between economic difficulties, economic policy and restrictions in spending on education. For many countries, macro-economic problems such as falling export earnings from major commodities, massive international and internal debt, falling real income and levels of welfare, and deteriorating fiscal conditions were imposing severe limitations on the

freedom and capacity to invest in basic education. In these circumstances many countries are concerned about maintaining the education service and are hardly in a position to sponsor improvements.

**1.08** The Minister stressed the devastating impact of structural adjustment policies on education. This includes deteriorating living standards for teachers, restrictions on the maintenance of educational infrastructure, shortage of teaching and learning materials, and forms of deprivation for marginal groups in society which restrict their access to basic education. Unless resources can be diverted to education, it is futile to plan for the improvement of education systems.

**1.09** Finally the Minister summarised the problems of planning for basic education in the Commonwealth Caribbean. First, the manpower requirements of economic development demand a wide range of skills from primary school graduates. Second, the Caribbean people themselves have high expectations from basic education programmes. Third, there is widespread concern that in a system oriented to high achievers, two-thirds of the school population receive irrelevant, often dysfunctional, education. The fourth set of concerns address the problem of falling standards of attainment, where expected levels of quality in literacy and numeracy are not being achieved.

### **Effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes**

**1.10** Ministers recognised that the impact of formal structural adjustment programmes allied to the consequences of economic recession dominate educational planning and resourcing in many ministries of education. While it is necessary to be aware of harsh economic realities constraining education expansion and improvement, it is also true that ignorance cannot be afforded. Countries should strive for the desirable, but in the short-term, reach for the attainable, seeking new ways of economising. A sophisticated view of macro-economics is needed, leading countries to analyse and adapt education strategies required for economic growth.

### **Solutions and Strategies in Place**

**1.11** The experience of Commonwealth countries indicated a range of responses to economic austerity:

a In many countries it is not possible to improve teacher morale and motivation by increasing salaries, since structural adjustment programmes inhibit this in non-productive sectors. The problem can in part be resolved by providing benefits in kind such as housing, equipment or health care, thus demonstrating the value society places on teachers. Teachers are in any case not motivated solely by material considerations: an example of selflessness is the dedication of teachers serving the 100,000-strong refugee community within Zimbabwe despite receiving no pay.

b India uses para-professionals in remote and poor areas in response to problems of teacher absenteeism. They have only eight years of schooling.

c Alternative forms of delivery systems, such as the open school in India and the distance education initiative in Zimbabwe, offer other options.

d Private sector operation but under the control of the Ministry of Education is practised by St Kitts and Nevis for pre-school education. Botswana, pursuing a market economy policy in charging school fees, is at the same time concerned that high fees conflict with principles of equity.

e There is scope for co-operation in the development and use of educational texts and materials.

f There is increasing recourse to the use of non-ministry resources, including those from the private sector and the community. Parental responsibility should be recognised and reflected in educational support. Governments should not be regarded as the sole provider; at the same time the possible, socially regressive effects of user-payer policies should be born in mind.

## **Quality-Quantity Debate**

1.12 Ministers returned to the issue of the apparent contradiction between quality and quantity in practice. In making political and administrative decisions it is often necessary to make a choice between the two. Innovations based on the advantages of modern technology can help reconcile the dichotomy. A case in point is the development of low-cost mini-laboratories in Sri Lanka which make it possible to improve classroom practice cost-effectively while maintaining equality of opportunity. The essence of quality education is universal access. Schools have to retain pupils. Issues of quality education have to take on board the problem of wastage or drop-out.

1.13 Efforts to increase enrolment include the offer of free education at primary level in order to encourage parents to send their children to school. But in countries where enrolment levels have reached 90 per cent, the issue is whether efforts should be made to reach out to the remaining five to 10 per cent. This is generally more difficult and a more expensive endeavour in terms of unit cost. Countries like Botswana have considered enforcement through compulsory education but prefer to encourage voluntary enrolment by making education more relevant.

## **Values**

1.14 A concern for values underlined the discussion, with some countries seeing quality education as a balanced all-round development of head, heart and hand. Schooling should be pursued not only to meet the needs of the economy but also for citizenship and developing individual potential.

## **Teacher Training**

1.15 Ministers voiced their concern on a number of issues related to teacher training for primary school teachers who are seen as the spearhead of quality education. These include the need to support and upgrade large numbers of untrained teachers, the costs of training and re-training, the challenge of providing adequate training facilities, the search for alternative cost-effective structures for training, and the need to upgrade entry-point qualifications for trainees. Incentives need to be provided for qualified teachers to remain within the service. A case was quoted where a differential pay scheme is in place for retaining science teachers who might otherwise be lost to industry.

## **Curriculum Reform**

1.16 Inevitably much of the effort to improve the quality of basic education revolves around curriculum reform which includes content and assessment strategies. Developing and developed countries assign high priority to curriculum review and renewal as part of their total effort to raise quality. Activities undertaken include, as in the case of Britain, the setting of objectives to enable teachers to evaluate pupil achievement, and against which schools are to be accountable for their performance. Countries recognise the need to back up curriculum change with national programmes of training on the assumption that effective change relies on a well-trained and motivated teaching force. Ministers expressed particular interest in improved assessment procedures as part of curriculum change.

## **Early Childhood Education**

1.17 Quality education issues bring with them renewed interest in the provision of early childhood education. In many countries this important preparatory stage is only available through the private sector. Some successful country experiences illustrate partnerships between governments, community groups and parents' associations.

## **Community Involvement**

1.18 Efforts have been directed to enhance quality through initiatives to make basic education more meaningful, relevant and accountable to those it serves. The involvement of parents, interested community members, and parent-teacher associations in a range of educational activities was highlighted. These include increasing resources available to schools through such devices as the government-community matching grant scheme in Mauritius. Further examples were given of individual and institutional efforts to strengthen school-community links by sharing of non-monetary resources.

## **Education for All**

1.19 At the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990, nations had made strong commitments to the learning needs of young people. The goal was to accomplish not only access to education for all by the year 2000 but also the far more daunting challenge of learning achievement for all. With this as context the Ministers examined the extent to which ground-level implementation is taking root in countries, and the activities which have been initiated at national and regional level in support of learning achievement for all.

1.20 Ministers described the strategies countries had embarked on since independence in designing educational systems that would effectively meet the aspirations of their populations. Much has been accomplished: increased access, better use of resources, more attention to education for girls, higher rates of literacy, curriculum and examination reforms, earmarking of funds for disadvantaged groups were among the initiatives described.

1.21 But much more needs to be done. Countries have to deal with the difficulty of planning education for children in remote, rural areas; the provision of "second-chance" educational opportunities for youth and adults; the negative attitudes of parents to schooling; curricula out of touch with the world of work; inadequate training and support facilities for teachers; the shortage of classrooms and generally sub-standard physical infrastructure; the inadequate qualifications of teachers; and the poor mobilisation of community support.

1.22 In his report, summarising agency initiatives (UNDP, Unesco, UNICEF, World Bank) for follow-up to the World Conference, Professor Colin Power, Assistant Director-General, Unesco, emphasised that the success of the Jomtien meeting has to be measured in terms of action and not in words.

1.23 Mobilisation of resources has begun. Several bilateral donors have informed Unesco of their intention to re-examine current aid policies, redirecting them to include basic education. More active working relationships with aid agencies are being developed by NGOs, whose practical experience and grassroots contacts have won the support of Unesco and other agencies. Within the UN system, regular meetings have been instituted for the executive heads of UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank and Unesco to review global progress.

1.24 Many Commonwealth countries are among those which have initiated activities that include the setting up of special inter-sectoral task forces to guide follow-up action; and the organisation of round-table meetings on Education for All with a view to mobilising domestic partners for a common education effort. Key funding agencies would be invited to the round-tables, following efforts to identify country needs for external assistance to basic education.

1.25 Professor Power stated a willingness on the part of Unesco to help develop country proposals for funding projects although it was not an aid agency itself. Unesco would take country concerns seriously regarding the development of consultant rosters of developing country experts and would help develop consultancy expertise. Plans are underway to support the growth of institutions such as universities as centres of specialisation at national and regional levels: these could be a source of future consultants.

1.26 In his response to Ministers' comments, the World Bank representative, Dr Wadi Haddad, pointed out that a gap exists between national needs and available resources. He noted that donor community contributions are very small in proportion to total national effort. Taking into account the severe hardships brought about by structural adjustment programmes, it was proposed that if macro-economic changes adversely affect Education for All improvements beyond normal accountability then a special meeting should be sought with senior management at the Bank. A request should be made for the issue to be raised with the Board of Directors via one of the executive directors from a Commonwealth country or through the Board of Governors. However, it was suggested that there is no substitute for concentrated national attention and support. The World Bank had met its own targets by doubling education lending up to US\$ 1.5 billion per annum, about 35 per cent of which is expected to go to basic education, reflecting policy support for human resource development.

### **Recommendations for Commonwealth Co-operation**

1.27 The following recommendations emerged from the addresses made by the keynote speakers, and the plenary discussions on the main theme.

**a The Commonwealth Secretariat, and international development programmes generally, should support national and regional experts and institutes in developing countries so as to achieve greater local autonomy in research and consultancies related to education reform.**

**b Joint projects within and between regions of the Commonwealth with the capacity to facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas and experience should be encouraged.**

**c Mechanisms should be developed for sharing information on key quality issues such as low cost textbook and audio-visual material production, and successful country projects, including technical information on planning formats and cost-recovery approaches.**

**d There should be greater technical co-operation in support of basic education, including funds for sharing experienced professionals for short-term assignments.**

**e The Commonwealth Secretariat should facilitate dialogue on the relationship between structural adjustment and educational policy and provision. This should involve dialogue between those responsible for public education and for public finance at the national level; and at the international level, Commonwealth governments, along with the international sponsors of the World Conference, should engage in discussions with the IMF to clarify policy options and problems related to Education for All in the context of structural adjustment.**

1.28 Following the plenary discussion, four ministerial committees met to discuss specific components of improving the quality of basic education. The four committees addressed the following topics:

Committee A : Better Schools and Better Classrooms

Committee B : Better Support and Services

Committee C : Education Beyond Formal Schooling

Committee D : Management and Resources

### **MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE A: BETTER SCHOOLS AND BETTER CLASSROOMS**

1.29 The Committee was chaired by the Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali of Sri Lanka and attended by representatives from the following countries and observer organisations: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana, Britain, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, The Gambia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Malaysia, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritius, Montserrat, Namibia, Nigeria, St Lucia, St Vincent and The Grenadines, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, CASTME and UNICEF.



1.30 The Committee was of the view that effective teaching and learning can only take place in a supportive environment. This includes an adequate physical infrastructure that facilitates learning – all children require access to texts, learning materials, reasonable space, desks and chairs. Equally important is a warm and caring climate, reflected in the relationship between staff and pupils.

1.31 Effective teaching is the critical element in improving classroom learning. In all countries greater attention needs to be given to teacher training and re-training, with countries sharing their successful experiences. New approaches, such as using the trained teacher to assist in training schemes, can do much to reduce the number of untrained teachers. The growing importance of the distance education mode should also be recognised. Special emphasis should be placed on training for multigrade teaching and the particular implications such training programmes have for pedagogical techniques, curriculum and materials.

1.32 While the issue of competitive remuneration as a means of retaining qualified teachers in the service is important, equally crucial is the effort to accord teachers the status and recognition they so richly deserve. The raising and maintaining of teacher morale and motivation in situations where the real value of monetary reward has fallen drastically is a challenge to which countries should respond actively.

1.33 The relevance of the curriculum and a clear statement of its objectives is as important as the role of teachers in improving the quality of education in Commonwealth classrooms. It must steer a fine balance between current needs and needs of the future; and between programmes planned for high flyers as well as for the less able. Above all, it must be sufficiently fine-tuned to help children achieve their individual potential while retaining a tough core that constitutes a lifelong resource in a competitive world. In basic education curricula, the need to focus on literacy and numeracy skills, for instance, needs to be emphasised. Designing and implementing such curricula has implications for resourcing teacher training and the development of materials.

1.34 No longer should schools be seen as independent of the community they are in and merely branches of government departments of education. Experiences across the Commonwealth demonstrate the conviction of countries that thriving school-community relationships are a mark of quality. Parents, community members, NGOs, religious organisations – all have a role to play. New mechanisms are emerging such as the Mauritian matching grants scheme that provide for participation in school activities, ranging from sports and cultural events to the actual building of schools. Such activities not only create a sense of ownership among community members, they also forge the way for local monitoring of the school's effectiveness, ensuring that it meets the community's standards of relevance and excellence.

1.35 In a review of quality indicators, it is necessary to take account of the wastage or drop-out rate. Countries succeeding in achieving high enrolment rates need to identify strategies that can maintain such rates. A high wastage rate, especially in the early stages of primary schooling, is a cause for deep concern. Often these figures reflect parents' negative attitudes to schooling, especially pronounced in the case of girls. Countries have devised several strategies to maintain and increase their enrolment figures including free tuition, provision of free or subsidised textbooks and midday meals, and free education for girls.

1.36 While increasing school enrolment is a sign of quality in terms of increased access and therefore better life chances, it also presents dilemmas. In the face of severe economic constraints, especially with many nations in the throes of debt crises, national exchequers have been called upon to cope with increased requirements for public financing. Solutions attempted by some countries are based on the principle of shifting the burden of financing from the state to the community and parents. Several patterns of partnership exist. Communities and parents build schools and provide the land while the state takes responsibility for recurrent costs. In some countries, a private school system is encouraged which charges higher fees than government schools but these private establishments tend to cater for the upper socio-economic groups only. Whatever the model

adopted, governments are expected to take the lead in charting the map for meeting quality targets and demonstrating their political will and commitment to improving the quality of schooling for children.

1.37 There is a dearth of research at school level in Commonwealth countries. More local information is required to understand class and school-level phenomena, while creating a rich store-house of available data for planning and teaching. International agencies including the Secretariat should assist countries in organising and conducting action research programmes that would provide relevant data. Research areas should include teaching and learning strategies in the classroom; support at teacher training level for strategies identified by research; and performance indicators related to teacher behaviour. International agencies, including the Commonwealth Secretariat, should spearhead information gathering and dissemination activities, assisting countries in utilising conclusions and findings in order to improve teaching and learning in their own schools.

## **MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE B: BETTER SUPPORT AND SERVICES**

1.38 The Committee was chaired by the Hon. Peter Oloo Aringo of Kenya and attended by representatives from the following countries and observer organisations: Australia, Barbados, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cayman Islands, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and The Grenadines, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, CAPA and the CARICOM Secretariat.

1.39 The Committee reviewed Commonwealth experience of improving the quality of education through better support and services, in particular; teacher recruitment and initial training; professional support and development of serving teachers; curriculum and the development of learning materials; assessment and examination procedures; and linkage between the various support services, including the inspectorate and advisory services.

1.40 The Committee unanimously agreed on the centrality of the teacher in improving the quality of education. While policy makers can initiate change in the educational structure, the curriculum and administration, it is teachers who have the greatest impact on learning. Measures are required to strengthen the capability of teachers in order to improve educational outcomes. Within a context of financial austerity, the most sensible policy option available to countries is for more effective use of existing resources with the aim of expanding the creative role of the teacher.

1.41 There is a need for increased Commonwealth co-operation at bilateral and regional levels in the training, re-training and upgrading of teachers, and in the development and implementation of effective programmes. Member countries with experience of successful practice should be of assistance to others seeking to embark on similar initiatives.

1.42 The Committee noted that Commonwealth experience in initial teacher training includes a variety of patterns and mixes of college-based and in-service training for teachers. There are still problems of balancing theory and classroom practice. There is a need to investigate country experiences in the area of teacher training, both initial and in-service, and to identify innovative strategies that focus attention on their role as managers of learning resources including time, materials and facilities. Some countries have taken the initiative in improving teacher educators by providing them with genuine professional grounding in the needs of primary education. Botswana and Kenya, for example, have courses in their universities to provide professional leadership in primary education.

1.43 The Committee noted that it is important to ensure that only those with a genuine interest in teaching as a career should be selected for the profession. Careful screening of applicants for training can help to eliminate undesirable candidates. In this selection process there is a need for teaching service commissions to work collaboratively with the professional bodies of the teaching force.

1.44 The Committee recognised the difficulties of releasing teachers for proper in-service training to implement curriculum changes. Several solutions were suggested including school-based programmes, the provision of in-service training by distance education, the use of experienced teachers to assist new recruits, and the use of self-instructional materials, as is the case in Sri Lanka. Visits by tutors to schools could supplement this training. This mode of training is less costly than the residential courses that take teachers away from their schools and sometimes necessitate replacing them.

1.45 In considering the retention of good teachers, the Committee felt that the teaching profession needs to be presented as a career with potential for promotion and job satisfaction. In Zimbabwe, for example, initiatives to retain teachers include the acceleration of progression through the system. Whereas in the past it used to take almost 16 years for a teacher to reach the top of the salary scale, this can now be done in six years if the teacher is performing well in the classroom. In some countries posts of senior or master teachers, whose role is to assist new recruits to the profession, have been created. The restoration of teacher morale can also be helped by teachers being given proper public appreciation and recognition through regular consultation over major policy issues which affect their work.

1.46 The production of effective learning materials remains a priority in many Commonwealth countries. The use of local resources, adaptation of texts prepared elsewhere, focus upon basic skills and community-oriented materials and the encouragement of teachers to provide more of their own resources are some of the initiatives and efforts being made by countries in the improvement of learning materials. In addition some countries like Barbados are putting more resources into school libraries. Others like Uganda, through international support, are equipping primary schools and teachers' colleges with textbooks, equipment and materials.

1.47 The Committee recognised that because of quantitative pressures on the education system, education officers, supervisors and inspectors are still undertaking their crucial role with no training at the outset and very little training on the job. Poor communication and lack of transport facilities are a problem faced in many countries, especially as they relate to rural and scattered communities. Initiatives which have been taken by some countries to review some of these problems include retraining of inspectors and education officers to emphasise their supportive role as advisers. The headteacher is seen as the kingpin, the front-line manager who can initiate strategies for qualitative improvements in the classroom if given the necessary training. For example, in Guyana, innovation in this area includes a plan for a staff training programme and the re-establishment of inspectors not only to monitor but also to advise teachers on identified problems.

1.48 The majority of the Committee were of the view that curriculum development should not be left entirely to teachers and administrators and that members of the community, including parents and NGOs have a vital role to play in the development of curricula consonant with local interests and needs.

1.49 Most innovations in relation to assessment and examination indicate a move towards school-based continuous assessment, which can be of benefit to teachers by providing feedback relating to their teaching and to an individual pupil's progress. The Committee noted however that most education systems are examination dominated because of the selective role of terminal examinations.

1.50 Some Committee members, while agreeing that the teacher is pivotal to the whole issue of improving education, felt that the needs of the pupils should not be forgotten. Special services for children with health and related socio-economic problems help to improve their attendance and reduce drop-out rates.

1.51 Though some countries experience difficulties in establishing parent-teacher associations and school committees, the value of better communication and working links between school and community is recognised. Several countries have successfully established school committees through which educators and local community leaders meet regularly to discuss the work of schools and ways of raising funds. Community initiative in building schools should be encouraged, though proper management and supervision is vital. The Harambee schools in Kenya provide one example.



1.52 The Committee recommended that:

a The Commonwealth Secretariat should facilitate and establish networking mechanisms both at pan-Commonwealth and regional levels. At Commonwealth level the Secretariat can provide information on various issues through, for example, a newsletter. At regional level, the Secretariat can use existing mechanisms to promote networking for the sharing of information, materials and expertise.

b The Commonwealth Secretariat should extract from the proceedings of the Conference issues both of general interest and of relevance to particular countries, and should facilitate the exchange of information, the development of expertise and the implementation of programmes according to the priorities indicated by member states and regional groupings. Furthermore, the Committee proposed that in working out strategies and mechanisms to assist member states in tackling issues and concerns related to quality, the Secretariat's activities should be targeted and focused rather than all-encompassing, concentrating on those issues which are at the heart of government policy and which relate to quality.

c The Commonwealth Secretariat should establish functional links with groups of international funding agencies and endeavour to strengthen representation on their advisory and executive organs so as to mobilise and access resources for projects and programmes in Commonwealth countries and to increase the identification and dissemination of information about successful practices in improving the quality of education.

### **COMMITTEE C: EDUCATION BEYOND FORMAL SCHOOLING**

1.53 The Committee was chaired by Hon. Simone Testa from Seychelles and attended by representatives from the following countries and observer organisations: The Bahamas, Barbados, Botswana, Britain, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cayman Islands, Ghana, Guyana, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, CAETA, CAPA, CARICOM Secretariat and The Commonwealth of Learning.

1.54 The Committee reviewed Commonwealth experience of quality in out-of-school education, paying particular attention to education for women and girls; complementary methods including the use of mass media, face-to-face learning, and the application of community resources; the sound use of educational resources; and the control of educational activities undertaken by the private sector. In examining out-of-school education it is at all times necessary to keep in mind the differing circumstances of countries with universal education, and those with differing proportions of the school age-group in school, and to distinguish between the needs of those who have never been, or could not go to school and those who have dropped out of school.

#### **Education for Women and Girls**

1.55 While Ministers were properly concerned with the education of men and boys, as well as of women and girls, and a number of educational issues are not gender-linked, the Committee noted the recommendation from the World Conference on Education for All to "ensure access to, and improve the quality, of education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their effective participation".

1.56 In considering their educational needs it is useful to distinguish between three educational purposes: literacy and numeracy, education to provide job skills, and education that relates to values. There is varied experience of literacy programmes: among the conditions of success it is necessary to enable learners to start in a national or mother tongue, as appropriate to the country concerned and to ensure the continuing supply of reading material so that learners do not relapse into illiteracy. Education to enhance job skills need not be limited to education in subjects that are the traditional preserve of women: they should also embrace subjects where job opportunities are widening including such areas as growth industries and information technology.

1.57 Education programmes should not be too narrowly conceived: education is about values as well as about literacy and jobs. While programmes designed for women are, of course, important, it is also necessary to ensure that the interests of women are taken into account in planning education more generally.

1.58 Out-of-school education should take account of students' circumstances: where, for example, programmes are addressed to single mothers, who have left school on pregnancy, they need to consider child care requirements, and the need for some of these students also to earn a living. Programmes have to be at a time and place that suit their students. Methods and materials, too, need to be designed and adapted to match their students: teaching materials that are suitable in school may not be appropriate out of school. Tutors for out-of-school education often need to use different techniques from those appropriate in school and require appropriate training. The Committee noted that a review of international experience of ways of running educational programmes that are particularly well adapted to the needs of women would be of value to member countries and recommended that this should be undertaken by the Secretariat.

1.59 In order to assist the process of developing educational policy within member countries, the Committee recommended the closest co-operation between ministries of education and ministries responsible for women's affairs. The Committee welcomed the recommendation of the recent Commonwealth Conference of Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs that The Commonwealth of Learning should submit a regular report to that Conference as well as reporting to Heads of Government and education ministers.

### **Methods and Approaches to Out-of-School Education**

1.60 In considering appropriate methods for out-of-school education the Committee noted that a wider range of organisations than those providing schooling are concerned with education out of school. While patterns of work vary from country to country, and from community to community, roles are played by governments and government institutions, by the community, by traditional institutions such as Quranic schools which might add new roles to their traditional ones, by church bodies and associations such as the YMCA and YWCA, and by the private sector. Governments generally retain a co-ordinating role and frequently see themselves as having a responsibility to co-ordinate, supervise, monitor and control the work of other agencies (see para. 1.65 below). At the same time the Committee recognised that school teachers are often the only people who can offer out-of-school education and the only buildings that can be used are school buildings.

1.61 The Committee saw the various methods of teaching out of school as being complementary. Distance education has proved of value under some circumstances but it was recognised that, at least at school level and for young students, it is necessary to provide an infrastructure of support and not rely on distance methods alone. There is valuable experience in, for example, Malawi and Zambia in providing such support through study centres. Where available, new forms of technology are being adapted to the use of distance education. In other cases use can be made of radio, till recently an almost forgotten medium, and of newspaper supplements. The Committee noted with appreciation that the sharing of distance-education resources and materials would be facilitated by the work being undertaken on behalf of The Commonwealth of Learning at the International Centre for Distance Learning. The Committee recommended continuing exploration by the Secretariat of Commonwealth-wide experience of varied approaches to the methodology of out-of-school education, including the use of mass media and of conventional face-to-face methods.

1.62 At the same time it was noted that technical limitations – the slowness of the mail, and the high cost, short life, and frequent scarcity of radio batteries – limits the effectiveness of radio-based education: cheap solar-powered radios are a dream but one that is worth pursuing for countries where battery supply remains a problem.

### **The Sound Use of Educational Resources**

1.63 Ministers were faced with hard choices in considering the allocation of resources to the widening of access to education and the raising of quality in this area. In many

countries the provision of basic education to the whole population for a stated minimum of years is an absolute priority, even though the unit cost of reaching the remotest or most disadvantaged children is higher than that of reaching the first, say, 80 per cent. In providing education out of school, it is often possible to make use of community resources as well as government funds. The Committee recognised that the choices facing ministries in this area are conditioned by their countries' differing stages of educational development, so that choices for countries with 100 per cent enrolment ratios differ from those in countries which have not yet achieved this.

### **Supervision and Control**

1.64 In many countries the private sector is playing a growing role in education. Private schools exist alongside state schools. The private sector is also developing vocational institutions; whereas, some years ago, these concentrated on secretarial studies, the growth areas now includes business studies and information technology. Member countries differ on the extent to which they wish to allow or encourage private-sector involvement. Where this is welcome, the Committee recognised that it is necessary to control the standards and practices of private-sector institutions.

1.65 A variety of approaches have been adopted to ensure such control and the Committee recommended that the Secretariat should review Commonwealth experience in this area. In some cases governments set minimum standards before schools can be registered and inspect them both before their registration is approved and after they are established in order to ensure that standards are maintained. Where institutions are working towards recognised public qualifications this provides a measure of control over the standard of their work. In some circumstances institutions have been encouraged to set up bodies for self-regulation, on the argument that private institutions see that it is in their own interests to police their own and fellow-institutions' work. Whichever method is used, the Committee recognised the importance of monitoring and maintaining standards, in the private as well as the public sector, both in the interests of the development of national human resources and to ensure that students are not offered a sham education that masquerades as genuine.

### **MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE D: MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES**

1.66 The Committee was chaired by Hon. Carlyle Dunkley of Jamaica and attended by representatives from the following countries and observer organisations: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Botswana, Britain, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Dominica, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Hong Kong, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and The Grenadines, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, CAETA, CARICOM Secretariat, CCEA, OECS, WCOTP.

1.67 The Committee agreed that good management in any field depends on establishing clear objectives, identifying resources to meet them, and evolving mechanisms to evaluate how far implementation has been carried out successfully. This is often very difficult to achieve in education, but necessary.

### **Policies and Priorities**

1.68 Some countries have no clearly-defined education sector plan to guide education planning, consultation and decision-making, and the evolution of a national education programme. Government has a leading role to play in articulating national education policy, consulting with interested constituencies (including ministry officials at various levels, schools, teachers, parents and the business community, churches and NGOs, unions and political parties), and building a national consensus about education policy.

1.69 It is particularly desirable that teachers should be consulted, and have the opportunity – individually, and as members of professional networks and unions – to contribute to the

evolution of education policy, because they are the ones who must implement it. Parents and communities too have a right to be consulted in the process of consensus-building; it is essential where they are expected to mobilise resources on behalf of education, especially where there is resistance to the idea that government alone cannot sustain universal primary provision. Government must rely on communities in the evolution of policy, the implementation of programmes, and the monitoring and evaluation of performance.

1.70 Where consultation takes place, and consensus is reached, great stability for education programmes is achieved, as they are public property and the legitimate concern of all.

1.71 Several Commonwealth countries are attempting to institutionalise the consultative/advisory process. The Jamaica National Education Council represents a wide cross-section of interests; this is also the intention of the proposed Grenada Education Advisory Council. The Nigerian Primary Education Commission prescribes national minimum standards of primary education, advises on funding primary education, distributes funds to states according to an agreed formula, supervises the implementation of education programmes and monitors the implementation of education reform in conjunction with the Primary School Management Board in each state, local government committees for primary education, and village committees which monitor the performance of teachers and schools in the community. In Britain parents and co-opted governors sit on each school board in the country, to monitor and in effect be responsible for schools' performance.

1.72 Policy-making therefore takes place at several levels: national long-term planning may provide a general policy framework, and deal with technical and legal complexities, as well as securing broad agreement about levels of investment; regional or district planning may be able to set more specific medium-term goals consistent with national objectives; and schools in many countries devise targeted short-term local objectives.

1.73 Too many schools appear to have no written statement of objectives, or goals stated in quantifiable terms to guide their work, and against which to evaluate their performance. Within the context of national curriculum objectives, it should be possible for every school to prepare a school development plan, which would identify resources, set achievement standards, devise evaluation and assessment criteria, establish an adequate reporting system, and institute a staff development programme. St Lucia's formulation of 12 variables to guide school performance is useful in this context.

## **Evaluation**

1.74 A school development plan which sets objectives for curriculum planning, deployment of human, material and financial resources, may also incorporate elements of internal and external audit. The school should be encouraged to give an account of its stewardship by making public various indicators of school performance including examination/achievement levels, attendance rates, utilisation of budgets, and the reports should be assessed against the background of the school's development plan.

## **Shortages of Trained Teachers**

1.75 Well-trained and committed teachers are central to the task of building a system which combines quality with equity of access. Teachers however continue to be unsupervised and unsupported in many countries – often because inspectors lack transport to take them to far-flung rural schools. Systems which are expanding to provide more pupil places, or which are losing trained teachers to other sectors are finding it necessary to retain the services of even undertrained/untrained teachers because of general overall shortages.

1.76 It is recognised that in many countries the teaching profession is a 'flat career', and teachers need to be better motivated: improved conditions of service and other non-salary incentives which recognise individual professional skill are required if good teachers are



to be retained in the system. National award and professional recognition schemes, for example, help to build morale among teachers and ensure they stay in the system.

1.77 Ways can be found to keep even inadequate teachers in schools and assist them to become effective. In-service programmes for large cadres of untrained teachers might be more cost-effective if run during school vacations, using campuses when not in regular use, or if distance learning techniques are used. Radio and television have the potential to make the skills of master teachers available to far greater numbers of children and supplement the skills of local support teachers. Other innovations – like Bermuda's Teacher Induction Programme, a scheme which attaches mentor teachers to probationary teachers – can also extend good practice.

### **Decentralisation**

1.78 It has sometimes proved difficult to decentralise education decision-making and administrative procedures, but a process of decentralisation and devolution should enable ministries to shed those responsibilities which the state is ill-equipped to discharge, and by localising decision-making, encourage schools to respond to community needs. Real and effective decentralisation has the capacity to solve some of the problems inherent in centralised decision-making, and allow local authorities, schools, parents and other users of the system to contribute to decisions about schooling, to regulate, administer and monitor education processes, and to encourage good practice in the interests of attracting community and corporate (private sector) support and resources. Another effect of decentralisation may be to enhance the political profile of education by making it the concern of larger constituencies.

1.79 In Ghana, senior administrators are now allocated to districts; Britain (like New Zealand) has introduced Local Management of Schools, and reconstituted school boards with parents and co-opted members (including business representatives) to monitor and be responsible for school performance.

1.80 Where there is an established framework of national education goals, ministries may be more confident in decentralising to local authorities. Botswana has decentralised to district offices, using an intersectoral approach to planning and devolution to give effect to the intention that it is not only the Ministry of Education which is competent to give direction on matters relating to education and training.

### **Education Managers**

1.81 Although headteachers are primarily instructional heads of schools, they require training in ways of managing budgets and school plant, teachers and material resources. This is particularly important where schools are becoming more independent of central authority.

1.82 Management training for headteachers is exemplified by Britain's Headteacher Management Task Force and the Scottish Education Department's management training modules for headteachers; the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI); Brunei Darussalam's programme of headteacher training; and Bermuda's in-service training programme for school heads.

1.83 Such training programmes for school heads are designed to improve their leadership potential and their skills in financial and personnel management, in law and public relations, as well as their professional responsibility for the teaching/learning process in school. It has sometimes been found practical to use training personnel from other human resource development sectors and various education subsectors.

1.84 Politicians have overall responsibility for the correct management of education programmes: in motivating professional staff and mobilising community interests; collaborating with associated ministries; representing the education sector in competition for scarce government resources; participating in education administration and evolution of policy, while giving space to professionals; representing professional interest to

multilaterals within the macro-economic context, and protecting the sector in negotiations; relating to ministerial colleagues in Foreign Affairs, Economic Planning, and Finance in carrying the concerns of education to the international community.

1.85 In this context, it should be appreciated that different holders of the office will bring certain strengths, but must be mindful of the need to secure relevant help in key skills areas which affect the discharge of their obligations. Ministers must have the capacity for self-examination.

1.86 Ministers need to ensure that the concerns of the social sector generally, and the education sub-sector specifically are kept to the forefront, to encourage the process of alliance-building with NGOs and other professional groups, and to secure as many resources as possible for education reconstruction.

## **Resources**

1.87 The general economic situation has made it difficult if not impossible to set aside adequate funds which would assure a quality education for all those eligible by virtue of age or attainment. This has affected ministries' capacity to plan and support reform programmes.

1.88 Ministries have a positive responsibility to deal with issues of budget allocation, waste containment, balanced allocation and more efficient use of resources, to advance the cause of disadvantaged minorities, and to ensure that performance within the education system is effectively monitored. They can also lead the search for incremental resources by supporting community and corporate initiatives. In so doing their interests will be well served by occasional meetings with colleagues in ministries of finance which may have the effect of making them more sensitive to the needs of education in the context of its importance for national development, and encourage them to review restrictive procedures which inhibit the efficient deployment of education budgets. Ministries would do well to mobilise the backing of teachers and their unions in such consultations.

1.89 In the absence of new money, increasing the resources available for reform depends on managing existing resources – in systems and in schools – more efficiently.

1.90 Books and other learning materials, like science and practical equipment, are fundamental to quality education and where possible these supports should be produced locally or regionally to achieve economies of scale.

1.91 New partnerships are required, with NGOs and churches, and with international development agencies, in pursuit of educational excellence. Ministries of education must be more confident in dealing with international development agencies, in determining how aid is to be utilised in terms of their own specified national goals and objectives as they relate to education and training.

1.92 In the post-Jomtien era, the extent to which the four host agencies (Unesco, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank) commit themselves to supporting basic education remains to be seen. The response of the World Bank to date has been encouraging, as has been the very positive response of the four host agencies in the aftermath of Jomtien. Unesco has suggested that the 1980s has been the 'lost decade' for education: the effect of structural adjustment programmes has in many countries been to encourage a flow of teachers away from the education system, and it will be difficult to recoup these losses, accompanied as they are by reduction in resources generally. It is essential that all international development agencies respond directly and openly to country initiatives, recognising that ministries do not resist calls for financial discipline and more efficient internal allocation of resources.

1.93 The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has on occasion, without adequate consultation, made decisions which adversely affect the delivery of education in developing countries. The IMF must be encouraged to negotiate face-to-face with its member countries in developing funding proposals.

## **Managing Change**

1.94 Once an education component is in place, it is difficult to undo. Several countries including Canada, Ghana and New Zealand, gave examples of resistance to the introduction of fee components in systems which had become non-fee-paying in the 1960s. There is perhaps a better chance of overcoming this kind of bureaucratic inertia by implementing drastic reform 'at a run'. Some experience indicates – as Britain suggested – that a slow start does not necessarily augur well for successful innovation.

## **Conclusions**

1.95 The following themes recommended themselves for further action at national and regional level, with support as appropriate from the Commonwealth Secretariat and international development agencies:

- a The evolution of national education policies and individual school plans with clearly stated goals and objectives.
- b Innovative strategies for upgrading the skills of large cadres of untrained teachers.
- c The sharing of experiences in decentralising education decision-making and administration.
- d The role and function of headteachers in mobilising and administering education resources including their teachers, and the training and support required to make them better managers.
- e Mobilising new resources by building new partnerships with other sectors, and with international development agencies.
- f Techniques and strategies in implementing education reform, supporting progress and monitoring performance.

1.96 It was specifically requested that the Commonwealth Secretariat convene a working group consisting of representative ministers and officials of the Jomtien host agencies (Unesco, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank) to enjoin the International Monetary Fund to articulate its agenda for supporting initiatives in education in a climate favourable to dialogue and exploration of viable options.

## **Higher Education Co-operation**

2.01 Ministers returned to the theme of Commonwealth higher education co-operation; a key concern at each of their previous conferences over the past decade. Such co-operation has a long history through the collaboration of university institutions in the Association of Commonwealth Universities and through the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan launched in 1959. Discussion focused on three issues:

- a Proposals for a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS).
- b Student Mobility.
- c The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP).

### **COMMONWEALTH HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT SCHEME (CHESS)**

2.02 In the course of the 1980s there had been increasing recognition of the need to sustain and strengthen universities and other post-secondary institutions, under siege in the face of resource constraints and the problems of accommodating growing demands with very

restricted budgets. Through programmes of bilateral assistance substantial resources have been transferred to developing countries, but there are gaps in provision. A number of important reports from the Commonwealth and elsewhere have pointed to possibilities of making more sustained progress, through collaborative efforts, by harnessing the bilateral and multilateral resources of Commonwealth countries through new co-ordinated arrangements.

2.03 The recent report of the Commonwealth Expert Group on the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS) draws attention to these possibilities and develops proposals for a new co-operative venture first advanced by the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation. In introducing the report of the Expert Group, its Chairman, Professor James Downey, noted that the CHESS concept rests on three principles: that human resource development is central to the self-sufficiency and prosperity of all nations; that higher education is essential to the creation of the intellectual and technological infrastructure required for human resource development; and that to help higher education institutions in developing countries meet the enormous challenges that confront them, there must be more extensive and effective co-ordination of available resources and greater co-operation among the resource-providing agencies. Professor Downey reported that the Expert Group had agreed that the principal objective of CHESS should be to build local capacity and to develop local institutions which, as the report affirmed, "must be rooted in the local society, supported eventually with local resources, and nurtured by local culture and values. This implies that the actual location of co-operative project activities should increasingly be in the developing countries, using local facilities and staff to the maximum extent possible".

2.04 Professor Downey went on to emphasise that problems of increasing demand and shrinking resources are being faced by higher education systems everywhere but that they are several times more formidable in developing countries. For example, between 1965 and 1985 Kenya's university enrolments increased by a factor of 10 and Malaysia's by 15.

2.05 Against this background the Expert Group took as its task the formulation of proposals and modalities for implementation which would: improve the selection and supply of books, journals and library materials and create or enhance library information networks; establish better systems of institutional management and train staff to operate them; and launch and support substantial programmes of staff development for higher education institutions in the developing Commonwealth. Two further assumptions were made by the Expert Group: first, that there would be no special Fund for CHESS, although CHESS projects would hopefully receive increased support in the future; and the second, that there would be no new agency created to administer CHESS. Despite these restrictions, the Expert Group believed that joint action in some clearly defined areas would bring distinct advantages including a greater pool of resources to facilitate large-scale projects beyond the scope of individual agencies; a wider choice for recipients; avoidance of duplication; a framework for developing country contributions, thus enhancing partnership; and increased dialogue among the co-operating agencies. CHESS, as seen by the Expert Group, offers both a new hope and a new approach to Commonwealth support for higher education by combining the best elements of bilateral and multilateral assistance, thereby creating a vehicle of common purpose, collective commitments and joint programmes, taking advantage of the spirit of co-operation so apparent in the Commonwealth.

2.06 Ministers expressed their thanks to Professor Downey and the Expert Group for their work in producing a report which clearly encapsulates so many of their own perceptions of the situation. In warmly endorsing the report, Ministers emphasised the timeliness of the CHESS proposal, asserting that current resource constraints make CHESS even more essential since overlap and duplication between various bilateral initiatives is an unaffordable luxury. Delegates confirmed the magnitude of the task. For example, in India, although 150 universities and 7000 colleges are currently enrolling over four million students, there is still unmet demand. Ministers affirmed CHESS to be an imaginative and creative response to the strengthening of post-secondary institutional capacity in



developing Commonwealth countries as well as a means of enhancing opportunities for South-South links. They felt the proposal has the potential to take Commonwealth co-operation forward in an area of great significance. New strategies in higher education co-operation are needed to ensure the growth of the national economy and the prosperity of Commonwealth citizenry.

2.07 Delegates concurred that CHESs should concentrate on the three areas identified by the Expert Group as being central to the improvement of higher education quality: books, learning materials and libraries; improved systems of resource management in institutions of higher learning; and staff development programmes. CHESs should seek to take maximum advantage of new information technologies in assisting institutions in developing countries to tackle some of their problems in these three areas. Ministers confirmed that help is most needed in science-based disciplines. It was further suggested that thought might be given to the establishment of a Commonwealth publishing house within the books priority area and that staff release time should be examined under staff development. In all areas the principle should be not to duplicate existing efforts but to focus on new areas of endeavour.

2.08 Ministers agreed that CHESs would be able to strengthen Commonwealth support on behalf of higher education development through a new approach combining bilateral and multilateral assistance. They noted with approval that the proposal for CHESs envisages no new agency being created, nor any special fund. Co-operative programmes or projects meeting the CHESs criteria for overall priority could be co-ordinated by a central agency, for example, the Higher Education Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat or the Association of Commonwealth Universities. This should be a point addressed at a further CHESs planning meeting. The possibilities offered by regional co-operation and the sharing of expertise from developing countries themselves were emphasised. Delegates also underlined the point that CHESs should use mechanisms of inter-institutional co-operation, as well as governmental machinery to mobilise resources for institutional development. It was also stressed that the preferred operational modes for CHESs should be those which contribute best to self-sustainability and the building of institutional capacity for the development of human resources but the issue of whether CHESs projects should invariably involve at least three Commonwealth countries was remitted for further exploration to a second planning meeting. Delegates confirmed the importance of being able to accomplish more collectively than individually.

2.09 Delegates acknowledged the usefulness of a planning meeting before the end of May 1991 which would work out in detail the operational modalities of CHESs and review plans for future collaborative activity. In this regard, a new request was made for a follow-up programme of assistance to Commonwealth countries which do not possess their own university-level institution and which have established commissions of enquiry to investigate that possibility. It was also suggested that the planning meeting examine more closely the question of post-graduate centres of specialisation which is a topic of interest and concern to many developing Commonwealth countries.

2.10 A report was presented to Ministers on progress made in furtherance of the recommendations of the Expert Group concerning studies and pilot projects on which a start had been made in all three priority areas by the Secretariat, with help from bilateral and multilateral agencies. In the implementation of CHESs pilot projects a number of countries stated that they had been pleased to offer support through their international development agencies and would be willing to consider favourably, further specific requests falling under CHESs. Delegates were reminded that priority commitment to higher education is needed in domestic budgets as well, if CHESs is to work successfully as a true partnership and not just a device for the export of developed country expertise.

2.11 Many delegates pointed out that "brain drain" not only deprives them of highly trained personnel but also necessitates the training of further students to fill vacant posts. In many countries the "brain drain" of university teaching staff can be slowed or reversed if increasing facilities are made available in their home institutions for research and teaching. Low morale and scarce foreign exchange exacerbate university problems. CHESs must ensure that developing countries benefit from its programmes to the fullest extent possible.

2.12 South-South and regional co-operation are also important features of CHES. Future action under CHES should also take advantage of links with The Commonwealth of Learning and co-ordinated activities in staff development through distance education, the development of learning materials and the utilisation of new information technologies.

2.13 In responding to the discussion Professor Downey reminded Ministers that although renewed commitment had been made to improve the quality of basic education, this is not inconsistent with the objectives of CHES. The threads of all education systems – basic, further and higher – are interwoven and interdependent. The Commonwealth had inherited an intellectual tradition in which it could take pride. Even when resources are scarce, countries should take steps to ensure that higher education institutions are worthy of this tradition, and bolster academic excellence. One way to do this is to maintain contact with the international scholarly community, with which endeavour CHES would be admirably placed to assist.

2.14 The CHES proposal is intended to put available resources for higher education development to the best possible use and in so doing demonstrate a generous quality of idealism. The 1980s had been a difficult, even a 'lost' decade for higher education in many parts of the Commonwealth; if embraced enthusiastically, CHES could help to reverse this trend and re-establish momentum for growth and development.

2.15 Ministers warmly endorsed the Expert Group's report and resolved that the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHES) should be established. They also endorsed three priority areas identified by the Expert Group in which CHES should focus its efforts, and agreed that no new administrative agency nor any special fund is needed. Finally Ministers agreed that a second planning meeting should be held within six months so as to develop one or more substantial collaborative activities in each CHES priority area.

## **COMMONWEALTH STUDENT MOBILITY**

2.16 The theme of student mobility had been a focus for Commonwealth Education Ministers at their meetings in Colombo in 1980, in Nicosia in 1984, at the Special Meeting in Sofia in 1985 and in Nairobi in 1987. In Barbados, Ministers concentrated on the decline in Commonwealth student mobility and on strategies for reversing it, in particular, the possibility of a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students and for Commonwealth student exchanges. The future scope and work of the Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation also received special attention.

2.17 The discussion was introduced by Sir Roy Marshall, Chairman of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation, who addressed himself to the continuing need for student mobility among Commonwealth countries and for access to study opportunities abroad. He drew attention to the decline in student mobility among Commonwealth countries generally, while student mobility has increased internationally. The worst affected are the poorest Commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia who are burdened with intolerable levels of external debt and who possess inadequate resources to make full provision for their needs. Although scholarships and awards from host countries are available and much appreciated, the fees are so high that the majority of Commonwealth students who fail to get an award are effectively barred from overseas study. Sir Roy argued that if student mobility, which has been the bedrock of Commonwealth relationships, continues to decline the Commonwealth connection will weaken.

2.18 Sir Roy went on to point out that although The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHES) are likely to stimulate the movement of students, both COL and CHES will complement opportunities for study abroad, not replace them.

2.19 He suggested that in order to put intra-Commonwealth student mobility back on an upward trend host country governments need to give consideration to the possibility of a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students, as had been foreseen in Nairobi.

From the point of view of developing countries fees are presently too high. Taking the example of Britain, the host country he knew best, he provided an analysis of the basis of the calculation of full-cost fees. There are three principle elements of public money that constitute a university's income – a teaching element, a research element and a support element. Indications of the amount allowed for the teaching element had been provided by the publication of guideline prices for teaching home students and Sir Roy noted that there is a wide gap between these prices and full-cost fees charged to overseas students. The Standing Committee considered it inequitable that overseas students should be required to bear the full share of the research component and that this should be standardised across universities. Research money is not disbursed equally to all universities, thus making it unfair for all foreign students to be charged the same amount. There are equally compelling arguments for overseas students not to pay the full costs of libraries, buildings, equipment, career and other services. The contribution of overseas students to the academic life and research capacity of universities should not be ignored.

2.20 Attention was drawn to the comparative disadvantage that Commonwealth students experience vis-a-vis certain non-Commonwealth students. Students from Martinique and Guadeloupe can enter British universities by paying home student fees. The European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS), provides opportunities for nationals of countries in the European Community (EC) to spend a year of study in another EC country, much of the additional cost being borne by the EC. Similar opportunities are provided in Britain to students from Poland and Hungary under the Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies (TEMPUS). Commonwealth sending countries, while pleased that depressed Central and Eastern European countries are receiving help, are dismayed that similar opportunities are being withheld from them. What developing Commonwealth countries need is help from Britain in negotiating equivalent benefits for their students.

2.21 Sir Roy recalled the Heads of Government agreement in Vancouver in 1987 that in due course, consideration should be given to the possibility of a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students. In his view "in due course" meant "now" and "possibility" had become "necessity". He therefore urged the Ministers to invite the Secretary-General to arrange for a report to be made to the meeting of Heads of Governments in Harare in 1991 concerning the scope of such a regime and the mechanisms, financial and administrative, for making it operative.

2.22 Ministers applauded the work of the Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation and shared Sir Roy's concern at the continued decline in intra-Commonwealth student mobility. Ministers reaffirmed the continuing importance of scholarships and awards to Commonwealth countries. For developing countries human resource development is a pre-requisite for socio-economic development. Scholarships and other awards are essential to enable students to avail themselves of higher education. It is therefore incumbent upon Commonwealth host countries to continue to show support for members of the Commonwealth family and to continue to critically examine measures to increase that support. There is need to match words with actions and for the more developed countries with better endowed institutions to continue to open their doors to the less developed countries.

2.23 Much of the debate centred around the issue of full-cost fees in the principal Commonwealth host countries. Ministers congratulated Sir Roy on his penetrating analysis of the full-cost fees in Britain. Frustration was expressed at the unfavourable treatment accorded to Commonwealth students as compared with students from the European Community and even from Eastern Europe. That students from French islands like Reunion could obtain access to British universities at the cost of home fees while those from Commonwealth countries have to bear the full cost of higher education is a provocation, even if the French islands have the status of Departments of Metropolitan France, pay French taxes and elect deputies to Paris. The strong feeling was expressed that Commonwealth students should enjoy comparable access to higher education facilities in Britain.

2.24 There was clear divergence of opinion on the calculation of full-cost fees as portrayed by Sir Roy on the one hand and as understood by the delegation from Britain. The difference of opinion hinges largely on whether it is proper to compare guideline prices for teaching home students with full-cost fees for students from abroad, and whether the research and support element of university fees charged to overseas students is excessive.

2.25 Host Commonwealth countries expressed their desire to assist in improving student mobility. Some Canadian universities are keen to attract students from countries which currently send few students to Canada and to improve the mix of disciplines. The fee structure in many Canadian provinces is favourable to overseas students. No provinces in Canada charge full-cost fees. Some charge marginally higher fees to overseas students than to home students, and some make no distinction in the fees charged to home and overseas students. Australia has diverted its former subsidy to those paying the Students Overseas Charge to a new scholarships programme, the Equity and Merit Scholarship. There is no decline in the aggregate amount of expenditure on support, and quotas have been removed. Although there is little prospect of returning to a situation of general subsidy, Britain's offers of awards have risen steadily. Of the 24,000 overseas students supported in 1989/90, at a cost of £127m, it is estimated that two-thirds went to students from the Commonwealth. India would continue to charge low and non-discriminatory fees to students from abroad.

2.26 Ministers urged the extension of strategies that lessen the burden of overseas study by initiating credit transfer, modular course structures, link and split-site course arrangements. However, Ministers were cautioned to examine carefully the distribution of benefits arising from such arrangements accruing to the partners concerned. Overseas institutions often vigorously market their programmes in partnership with local agencies, turning education primarily into a business enterprise, sacrificing the social ideas of education. Their focus on providing credentials rather than a genuine educational experience is regrettable.

2.27 Distance education programmes and facilities were recognised as important initiatives towards providing greater access to education for students in developing countries.

2.28 Developing countries were urged to promote student interchange through the offer of places in their institutions of higher education to other Commonwealth countries. Some countries in Africa with the capacity to do so, are already offering places to their neighbours. Such reciprocity among Commonwealth countries could assist the cause of student mobility as well as promote Commonwealth fellowship.

2.29 Ministers overwhelmingly expressed confidence in the work of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation. The Committee was urged to continue its excellent work in exploring ways and means of monitoring and increasing intra-Commonwealth mobility. They agreed that the Committee should retain its present designation, but that its terms of reference should be enlarged to include responsibilities in relation to the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS). Its membership should comprise persons of eminence who would participate in the work in their own right. Some way should be found to associate major donors with its work without jeopardising the Committee's independence.

2.30 Ministers requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the major host countries, to explore the scope and modalities of introducing a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students and the mechanisms, financial and administrative, for making it operative. Mindful of the importance of this question for the future of the Commonwealth, which Heads of Government would be reviewing at Harare in late 1991, Ministers asked that a report should be presented to Commonwealth Heads of Government at Harare.

## **COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN**

2.31 Ministers endorsed the report of the Working Party on the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP).



## **REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN**

1 Under the Chairmanship of Mr Peter Hetherington, Deputy Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities and Joint Secretary to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Commission of the United Kingdom, a working party of senior officials met on Sunday 28 October 1990 in the Dover Convention Centre to review the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), and to make recommendations concerning the Plan to the Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers.

2 The working party considered the progress of the CSFP since the Tenth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Nairobi in July 1987 under the following headings:

- a Participation of women in the Plan
- b Age limits
- c Awards for study at undergraduate level
- d The return home of scholars
- e Communication between agencies
- f Amendments to the fifth edition of the CSFP Administrative Handbook
- g A third ten-year review of the Plan
- h Further meetings of CSFP agency administrators.

### **Participation of women in the Plan**

3 In welcoming twenty-eight delegates from twenty-one Commonwealth countries the Chairman noted that the Plan was now thirty years old. He drew the attention of the working party to the draft summary report of the second meeting of CSFP agency administrators which had been held the previous day which touched on many of the issues to be explored by the working party.

4 Referring to the background paper on the CSFP prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Chairman pointed out that there had been a decline of about 15 per cent in the uptake of CSFP awards since the last meeting of Commonwealth Education Ministers. He hoped that this trend might be reversed. It was also noted that although there had been agreement to seek to increase the number of women participating in the Plan, while there was a small proportionate increase of 1 per cent over the three-year period, their numbers showed a net drop. A number of awarding countries expressed their desire to make more awards to women but pointed out that this was dependent on their being forwarded as candidates by nominating countries.

5 A suggestion was made that awarding countries should provide better family support to women scholars through day-care and other social services which some universities now offer.

6 In some cases, awarding countries agreed to waive the usual academic requirements (upper second pass) as long as a nomination was supported by sufficient evidence of the quality of the candidate and his or her ability to carry out advanced academic work.

### **Age limits**

7 A number of delegates expressed concern that age limits tended to discriminate against candidates with work experience or against women who had stepped out of academic life to raise families. Of those countries who use age limits as a condition of eligibility, for example, Botswana will not accept applicants for graduate study over the age of 45 and The Gambia will not nominate candidates over 27 for undergraduate awards. Some awarding countries, such as Canada, India and Nigeria, do not impose any age limit. In the United Kingdom, special consideration is given to candidates who have had to postpone their entry or re-entry into higher education.

8 It was agreed that the responsibility for advertising eligibility requirements, including whether to include information on age limits, rests with the nominating country.

### **Awards for study at undergraduate level**

9 A number of participants confirmed the importance of CSFP awards for undergraduate studies, especially for students from small countries, often island states, who did not have their own post-secondary or university institutions. On the other hand, some concern was expressed at the length of time scholars would require to complete a degree programme.

10 Awarding countries emphasised that one of the primary objectives of the Plan was to provide awards for postgraduate study but that undergraduate awards for postgraduate awards would be made in exceptional circumstances such as those outlined in paragraph 9 above. It was not possible to generalise, however, on the length of time needed to complete degree programmes since individual institutional requirements varied widely (from three to four years for undergraduate programmes, one to two years for masters after a first degree in the same subject, and one to five years for doctoral studies).

### **The return home of scholars**

11 Concern was expressed at difficulties experienced in ensuring that scholars returned home on completion of the tenure of their awards. Although it was acknowledged that there was no simple solution to such problems, it was agreed that return home is influenced not only by conditions in the host country (for example, the Employment and Immigration Canada regulations which allow Commonwealth scholars to extend their stay up to a further twelve months in order to gain study-related work experience) but also opportunities available at home for returning scholars.

12 It was agreed that awarding countries should notify nominating countries of scholars' impending return. Moreover, it was accepted practice that scholars should receive approval from their nominating agencies should they wish to extend the tenure of their awards or their stay in host countries. It was acknowledged, however, that nominating countries also have a role to play in ensuring that scholars return home, for example, through such devices as bonding. The capacity of nominating countries to retain scholars should be implicit from recruitment of candidates to their return home and retention thereafter.

### **Communication between agencies**

13 While there was agreement that communication with regard to offers or awards should be made direct between CSFP agencies (ref para 3 p.13 CSFP Administrative Handbook) there was some difference of opinion concerning the offer of CSFP awards from awarding countries direct to individual scholars.

14 It was agreed that nominating countries be kept fully informed as to the offer of CSFP awards by awarding agencies since these decisions would have resource implications in nominating countries (replacement of teaching staff on scholarships, for example).

15 Both Canada and the United Kingdom indicated that they would refer this question to their respective CSFP commissions for further consideration in the near future (February 1991). Participants were also reminded that since nominating agencies approved and forwarded nominations, they were aware of the implications of awards from an early stage of the nominating process. It was also noted that if a nominating country, for whatever reason, withdrew its support of a candidate, awarding countries would not maintain support in these circumstances. It was also noted that as communication between awarding countries and individual scholars was a unique characteristic of the CSFP it should be maintained as a feature of the Plan.

### **Amendments to the fifth edition of the CSFP Administrative Handbook**

16 The Chairman indicated that only one response to his formal request for amendments to the CSFP Administrative Handbook had been received prior to the meeting. While it was agreed that the addition of information on the value of awards to the CSFP Administrative Handbook would be impracticable, it was possible for nominating countries to have this information from awarding countries on request.

17 On the other hand, several proposals for amendments had been put forward by the second CSFP agency administrators meeting held on 27 October 1990. The first proposal concerned the question of age limits discussed above (paras 7-8). It was recommended that page 8, para 5 of the CSFP Administrative Handbook be revised to read additionally "Where awarding countries apply an upper age limit, special consideration should be given to candidates who have had to postpone their entry or re-entry into higher education". The second proposal referred to the importance of undergraduate CSFP awards for countries which did not have their own post-secondary institutions. The third proposal reaffirmed that communication concerning offers of awards and nominations of scholars should be made direct between CSFP agencies as already noted in the Administrative Handbook.

18 Subject to any expressed views of Ministers, it is proposed to incorporate these amendments in the sixth edition of the CSFP Administrative Handbook.

### **A third ten-year review of the Plan**

19 The Chairman suggested that the time had come to look once again at the overall context of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. To this end the meeting of CSFP agency administrators supported the proposal that a third ten-year review should be undertaken to guide the CSFP into its fourth decade.

20 The working party agreed that a third ten-year review would be particularly useful and should include:

- a A review of the countries offering CSFP awards
- b An increase in the number of awards since the last review
- c The participation of women in the Plan
- d The provision of awards at undergraduate level, especially for countries without their own tertiary education institutions
- e The return of scholars on completion of their awards, their assimilation and retention
- f New modes in which the CSFP could find expression thirty years after its inception, for example, through special provision for awards for higher education administrators as well as for courses taken through the distance education mode.

21 Ministers are asked to approve the implementation of a third ten-year review of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan which would critically evaluate the progress of the Plan since the previous review in 1982 as well as consider such matters as those outlined in para 20 above.

### **Further meetings of CSFP agency administrators**

22 The proposal that CSFP agency administrators hold further meetings was unanimously accepted by the working party. It was suggested that administrators meet not only immediately prior to the Twelfth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers but also in connection with the third ten-year review. Ministers are requested to endorse this recommendation of the working party.

### **Conclusion**

23 While the foregoing activities were regarded as being important for the progress of the CSFP, it was recognised that the resources required for their implementation would need to be examined in the light of the priorities for the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat. To this end the working party recommended that the proposal for the third ten-year review of the Plan be referred to the working party of officials considering the work programme of the Secretariat in education.

### **Summary of recommendations**

24 Ministers are requested to endorse the following recommendations of the working party on the CSFP:

- a That women be further encouraged to participate in the Plan;
- b That age limits not be used as a condition of eligibility adding to the paragraph 5, page 8 of the CSFP Administrative Handbook, "Where awarding countries apply an upper age limit, special consideration should be given to candidates who have had to postpone their entry into higher education";
- c That undergraduate awards be offered to countries who do not have their own post-secondary institutions;
- d That efforts be made by both nominating and awarding agencies to ensure that scholars return home upon completion of their awards as stated in the objectives of the Plan;
- e That communication direct between CSFP agencies and between agencies and scholars be maintained in the CSFP Administrative Handbook;
- f That a third ten-year review of the CSFP be implemented to critically evaluate progress of the Plan since the last review and to consider:
  - i A review of countries offering CSFP awards
  - ii An increase in the number of awards

- iii The participation of women in the Plan
  - iv The provision of awards at undergraduate level
  - v The return home of scholars, their assimilation and retention
  - vi New modes in which the CSFP could find expression (awards for higher education administrators and for distance education).
- g That in view of their usefulness further meetings of CSFP agency administrators be held to coincide with the deliberations of the third ten-year review committee and the Twelfth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers.

## **The Commonwealth of Learning**

3.01 Ministers received the report submitted to them by the Board of The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) as required by its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The report summarised the progress made since The Commonwealth of Learning had started work in January 1989. The new agency has as its objectives the widening of access and the improvement of quality through Commonwealth co-operation in distance education. Core staff for COL are now in place with geographical responsibilities for Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific and professional responsibilities in appropriate functional areas derived from the MOU. An organisational infrastructure has been set up at COL's headquarters and work has started in training distance educators for Commonwealth universities, colleges and other educational institutions, facilitating access to instructional materials, telecommunications, institutional development, research and information. Agreement has been reached with the British Open University on working arrangements for the University to provide an information service on behalf of COL through the International Centre for Distance Learning which is located on its campus. COL has made a start on work in five sectors that are seen as among its priorities: continuing professional education, teacher education, marine resources management, the environment and women in development.

3.02 The report had been considered by a Conference working party. Ministers noted with pleasure the progress that had been made since The Commonwealth of Learning's establishment and congratulated the agency on the range of activities that had been launched. They unanimously endorsed the recommendations of the working party which are reproduced below.

3.03 In considering the work of The Commonwealth of Learning Ministers noted that productive working relationships are maintained with the Education Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat. They stressed the importance of measures which would encourage and facilitate access to educational materials available from anywhere within the Commonwealth, including arrangements to make materials available at marginal cost where this proved possible. In this context COL would look into the feasibility of a suggestion of establishing a bank of materials. Ministers noted that, along with its work in promoting co-operation between educational institutions, COL has a role in advocacy and in promoting disinterested research on the use and effectiveness of distance education.

3.04 The establishment of The Commonwealth of Learning had been made possible by the decision of Heads of Government at their meeting in Vancouver in 1987 to pledge funds. The lead given by the Vancouver meeting has now been followed by about half of the total Commonwealth membership. While recognising the limits to funds that could be made available, especially by small states, Ministers expressed the hope that as many countries as possible would be able to make at least modest pledges of funds as a symbol of their support for COL's work. They noted the particular value to COL of funds contributed to its core budget which could be freely used for any of its purposes.

3.05 In order to provide for an assured continuity of activity it would be necessary for Heads of Government to consider at their meeting in Harare in 1991 the commitment of a new tranche of funding to follow that committed for its first five-year period. While COL would raise project funds for specific activities which it is undertaking and supporting,



Ministers noted the need for it to have a continued and expanded core budget. They agreed to commend to Heads of Government the pledging of further funds.

3.06 Under clause 6(b)(iii) of the Memorandum of Understanding the ministerial conference is responsible for determining which four countries should nominate Board members for a three year term of office. Following the recommendation of the Board and working party, Ministers agreed a sequence of retirement for the existing Board and that members to replace them should be appointed by countries organised in regional constituencies. New members would be appointed from Asia and the Mediterranean to serve from January 1991, from both the Caribbean and the Pacific regions to serve from January 1992, and from Africa to serve from January 1993. After discussions within the framework of the Conference Ministers approved recommendations that Sri Lanka and Uganda should appoint Board members for the Asia and Mediterranean, and African constituencies respectively. Consultations outside the Conference would continue between countries in the Caribbean and Pacific regions and be communicated to The Commonwealth of Learning. While agreeing these arrangements, Ministers noted that African countries had expressed the view that more than one representative on the Board appointed under this clause of the Memorandum of Understanding should come from their region.

3.07 The Memorandum of Understanding required that the Board should report both to Ministers of Education and to Heads of Government. Ministers noted and endorsed a recommendation of the recent conference of Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs that COL should also submit a regular report to such conferences.

#### **REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING**

1 The Chairman of the Working Party, Hon Bakary B Dabo, Vice-President and Minister of Education, The Gambia, welcomed delegates, noting that as this was the first time since its establishment that The Commonwealth of Learning was reporting to the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers there were no precedents with regard to the mode of reporting from the Board of The Commonwealth of Learning to the Conference of Ministers. He was pleased to accept the invitation to preside over the Working Party of Officials. The provisional agenda was adopted and the Chairman introduced the President of The Commonwealth of Learning, Dr James A Maraj, and invited him to present the two papers submitted for consideration by the Board of Governors.

#### **Rotation of Board Membership**

2 Dr Maraj, on introducing the papers (4/C and 4/C Revised) on the Rotation of Board Membership noted that the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Commonwealth Governments, which established The Commonwealth of Learning, made provision for a Board of Governors with six categories of membership:

a **The Chairman** appointed by the Board.

b **Five** members appointed by name by each of the five Commonwealth Governments which have pledged the largest financial contributions to the agency or programmes approved by the Board over the forthcoming three financial years.

c **Four** members appointed by each of four Commonwealth Governments as decided by Commonwealth Education Ministers, following a principle that allows for rotation.

d **Three** members appointed by the Board.

e **Two** members appointed by the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

f **The Commonwealth Secretary-General** (or the Secretary-General's representative) and **The President** of the agency (ex officio).

3 The initial appointments to the Board were made by the Commonwealth Secretary-General after appropriate consultation. According to the Memorandum of Understanding one-third of the members must retire each year. This rotation provision affects nine members only, since major donors are defined by government pledges, and the remaining Board members are the Chairman, the Secretary-General and the President by virtue of their appointed office.

4 At its meeting on 25-26 October 1990 the Board of Governors of The Commonwealth of Learning reviewed the paper it had originally circulated to Ministers (4/C), and recommended two changes aimed at simplifying the principles involved. These are shown in Document 4/C Revised.

5 The Working Party accepted the two changes and agreed to make the following recommendations:

**a For the purposes of Board representation Commonwealth countries should be regarded as falling into five groups:**

- i Representing major donors (five countries)
- ii Representing Africa (15 countries)
- iii Representing Asia and the Mediterranean (eight countries)
- iv Representing the Caribbean (12 countries)
- v Representing the Pacific (10 countries)

**b That a sequence of appointment be adopted, as set out in Document 4/C Revised, and be applied as follows:**

- i In 1990 the representative from Malta will retire, and be replaced by a nomination from a country in the constituency representing Asia and the Mediterranean.
- ii In 1991 two representatives will retire:
  - The representative from Barbados will be replaced by a nomination from a country in the constituency representing the Caribbean.
  - The representative from Australia will be replaced by a nomination from a country in the constituency representing the Pacific.
- iii In 1992 the representative from Zimbabwe will retire, and be replaced by a nomination from a country in the constituency representing Africa.

**c Retirements will be effective on 31 December of any given year. Before that date The Commonwealth of Learning will liaise with the country selected by each of the appropriate constituencies and obtain the name of an appropriate individual from that country. In selecting such individuals countries are asked to keep in mind several factors. These include the representation on the Board of interests concerned with distance education, education in general, and the business and communication sectors, and particularly, the need for gender balance referred to in the Commonwealth Action Plan on Women.**

## Report to Ministers of Education

### Introduction

6 The President introduced the Report of the Board of Governors (4/B) which had been circulated to Ministers earlier, and drew attention to the essential purposes of the relatively new institution and its modus operandi. In this process he emphasised that the widening of access and improvement of quality were the organisation's principal objectives. It was concerned with promoting human resource development in the Commonwealth, utilising techniques associated with distance education, including communications technologies.

7 A small headquarters staff has been engaged in ordering the priorities based on consultation with governments, and the directions of the Board; the initial period has been one of contact and exploration, with the development of a programme that reflects a geographical balance in the Commonwealth, a balance between different functional areas, and most importantly, a balance between programmes which emphasise higher education and those which encourage the development of other levels of education and training. A supplementary document which was tabled (A Compendium of Activities, 1989-90) provided further information on specific projects.

8 The Board is in the process of finalising a strategic plan for the next three years, and this will facilitate both a detailed work plan for the agency, and a financial plan.

9 The President drew attention to the Board's concern that thirty Commonwealth countries have yet to make a financial commitment to the work of The Commonwealth of Learning. Even a small amount pledged would make a significant impact in signalling support for the concept, and for the work, of The Commonwealth of Learning.

### Discussion

10 There was a general expression of satisfaction with the initial work of the agency.

11 The Commonwealth of Learning was urged to include all countries in the various regions of the Commonwealth in its work and to ensure as much project money was spent as possible in the recipient countries.

12 The close working relationship with the Education Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat was noted, as was the desirability of building upon existing distance education programmes in various regions of the Commonwealth. In this context, a review of the regional university in the South Pacific was nearing completion, and was expected to be followed by a similar exercise in the Caribbean.

#### Technology and Materials

13 The Commonwealth of Learning was urged to become an information centre for advising countries on appropriate technology for distance education which was capable of sustainable development. It was important, too, that the profile of the agency be raised, and Ministers were urged to assist in this process. Towards this end, it was noted that The Commonwealth of Learning would provide delegations with publicity materials during the Conference.

14 A basic principle in the establishment of the agency had concerned the need to move quality distance education course materials from developed to developing countries, and Ministers were urged to assist in this process wherever possible.

#### Planning and Implementation

15 The importance of regional consultations was emphasised, and officials noted that it takes time for a new organisation to come of age. They noted with satisfaction that the first Report to Ministers reflected progress, and looked forward to a definitive work plan to schedule the intentions that had been proposed so that member countries know what to expect from The Commonwealth of Learning. It was noted that the Board also urged the development of performance indicators to facilitate evaluation.

#### Financing the Agency

16 The Working Party noted that it was important that countries should make pledges for specific periods of time, and that some small countries may pledge at opportune economic times.

17 The funding issue was identified as of crucial importance. The agency's recurrent needs must be addressed, and Education Ministers would need to understand the importance of this issue in order to advise Heads of Government before the Harare Heads of Government Meeting next year.

#### Recommendations

18 The Working Party recommends that Ministers:

**a Endorse the distinctive contribution that distance education can make to improving the quality of education at all levels and to foster its wider adoption.**

**b Note the progress made by The Commonwealth of Learning in the short time it has been in existence.**

**c Encourage and facilitate the flow of existing materials especially to the developing countries whose progress can be significantly accelerated by making such materials more readily available.**

**d Assist in publicising The Commonwealth of Learning and making better known to Governments, their agencies and institutions as well as other international organisations with which they interact, the purposes, objectives, functions and programmes of the new organisation.**

**e Observe the pattern and extent of The Commonwealth of Learning's present funding, remit outstanding pledges and make new pledges or contributions as appropriate.**

**f Support and respond to the call by Heads of Government for increased contributions to The Commonwealth of Learning's core budget and for greater flexibility in the use of earmarked funds.**

**g Realise that, before they meet next, the initial period for which funding has been provided to The Commonwealth of Learning would have expired.**

h Take such action as they deem appropriate to assist Heads of Government in preparing for their meeting in Harare to chart a path for The Commonwealth of Learning after its first five year period.

## Conclusion

19 In his concluding remarks the Chairman commended the Board, the President and staff for the impressive progress made in a short period of time, and expressed the appreciation of the Working Party for the significant contributions of the Governments of Canada and the Province of British Columbia for their assistance in getting the new Commonwealth agency established.

## Annex C – Revised: Proposed Constituencies

- 1 **Major Donors** (5). Britain, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, India, Nigeria.
- 2 **Africa** (15). Botswana, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
- 3 **Asia and the Mediterranean** (8). Bangladesh, Cyprus, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka.
- 4 **The Caribbean** (12). Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and The Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago.
- 5 **The Pacific** (10). Australia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa.

Note: If, under the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, a country ceases to be a major donor, arrangements will be made for that country to be included within an appropriate regional constituency.

## Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education

4.01 The task of giving primary consideration to the Commonwealth Secretariat's work programme in education was assigned to a working party of officials which met twice. At the first meeting on Sunday 28 October officials reviewed the work which the Secretariat had undertaken since 10 CCEM in Nairobi in 1987. At the second meeting, on Thursday 1 November, proposals were formulated for a work programme for the period 1991-1996.

4.02 The Secretariat's paper **Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education** (WP/B) provided the main documentation for the working party. This was supplemented for the discussion on future work proposals by a digest of Ministers' conference discussions in **Outcomes of Ministerial Discussions for the Work Programme in Education** (WP/C).

4.03 The report prepared by the working party was submitted to Ministers who, on the final day of the Conference, adopted it with certain amendments. These amendments have been incorporated in the report which follows.

4.04 The working party meetings were chaired by Mr Carlyle V Carter, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture, Barbados.

## Review 1987 – 1990

4.05 The working party reviewed the work programme of the Secretariat in education from 1987 to 1990. Before specifically considering the work of the Education Programme, note was taken of the range of education and training activities undertaken by other Secretariat divisions, including those in the Human Resource Development Group (HRDG) of which

the Education Programme is part, and the Secretariat's funding agency, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC).

4.06 The working party acknowledged the value of scholarships and fellowships awarded by the Fellowships and Training Programme of CFTC (13.4 per cent of 1989/90 awards were in the education sector) and the provision of expertise from other Commonwealth countries through the General Technical Assistance division (18 per cent of its financial allocation was to education in 1989/90). It was noted that CFTC did not apply a rigid quota system in responding to requests from member countries for training and for advisory assistance, although some broad balance was kept on a regional basis.

4.07 In noting the work of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) the working party stressed the importance of involving young people in consultative activity, programme design and programme execution. It welcomed the emphasis which CYP was giving to ensuring the direct participation of youth in its current programmes.

4.08 The main focus for the working party was to review activities undertaken by the Education Programme over the preceding three years. At their Tenth Conference in Nairobi, Ministers of Education proposed that "... work in the coming triennium should focus on education and work, reflecting the theme of their conference, higher education co-operation, and distance education and the new technologies. In addition, attention should continue to be paid to educational development in small states, and to the inter-relationship of science, mathematics and technology education".

4.09 The working party acknowledged that much had been accomplished in responding to the recommendations of Ministers at 10 CCEM, especially when regard was given to the level of core funding and staffing available to the Education Programme.

4.10 It was agreed that efforts should continue to be made to improve monitoring and evaluation procedures so as to enable judgements to be made on the impact of Secretariat activities on national educational development. The Working Party suggested that in addition to the use of internal Secretariat instruments developed by the Human Resource Development Group, member countries, through their ministries of education, should be encouraged to provide feedback on the outcomes and impact of Secretariat activity.

4.11 The working party suggested that the periodic reviews of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and the work of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation provided helpful examples of another type of review and evaluation mechanism. Similar review processes might usefully be applied to areas of work other than higher education. In this context the working party welcomed the information that an evaluation meeting would be held in Harare in 1991 on the HRDG project on improving the management of the teaching service in Southern Africa.

4.12 The theme of 10 CCEM had been vocationally-oriented education. The working party agreed that the Secretariat had been right to focus on a manageable set of activities geared to producing curriculum guidelines on entrepreneurial skills development in technical and vocational institutions. Thirty-two institutions had been involved in the activity. The working party expressed the view that work on entrepreneurship should continue and not be bound by the triennium between ministers' conferences.

4.13 The working party congratulated the Secretariat on the speed and efficiency with which it had worked in establishing The Commonwealth of Learning (COL). Member countries now looked forward to working with the new institution. One area on which countries needed guidance was the evaluation of distance education programmes to assess their social and economic benefits. The Secretariat indicated that papers prepared, with British financial assistance, for the groups chaired by Lord Briggs and Dr John Daniel in the period leading to the establishment of COL, were helpful in this respect and could be made available to member countries. Work in hand by the Secretariat in association with COL included studies of the cost-effectiveness of training teachers using distance education. This work would be completed within twelve months.

4.14 The working party recognised that there would be substantive discussion on COL during the Conference. Brief note was taken of the need to support and develop the



distance education programmes of the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana.

4.15 The working party noted the value which countries in Southern Africa placed on the Secretariat's work in improving the management of teachers. It recommended that the extension of this activity both within the sub-region and elsewhere in the Commonwealth should be considered under the future work programme post-11 CCEM.

4.16 The Programme's work on educational development in small states was acknowledged as an area in which the Secretariat had some comparative advantage. Its work on tertiary education policy options and the organisation and management of ministries of education had involved institutions and administrators in many small states. It was also the case that small states were involved both as participants and as the venue for activities in the other main areas of work undertaken by the Education Programme.

4.17 The working party noted the concern of African member countries in promoting science and technology education for girls. The roadshow approach recently developed by the Programme in Botswana was an imaginative way of helping to change attitudes and perceptions. The experience of countries which had overcome these obstacles could usefully inform the development of new approaches elsewhere.

4.18 The working party deferred discussion on co-operation in higher education in the knowledge that this would be discussed extensively during the Conference but attention was drawn briefly to the very considerable problems countries were facing in obtaining books and professional journals for their institutions of higher education.

#### **A Future Work Programme for the Secretariat's Education Programme 1991-1996**

4.19 In reaching its views on the direction, scope and modality of post-11 CCEM activity the Working Party recognised a number of major principles which should inform the process of determining a Secretariat work programme in education. Given its modest level of resources it was important that the Secretariat could demonstrate a comparative advantage in its choice of subjects and its modes of operation. It should not overstretch its capacity and should focus its work on a discrete set of manageable activities. At the same time the Secretariat should continue to respond flexibly to the needs of member countries which in some cases would involve identifying and co-ordinating resources and expertise from other agencies.

4.20 The working party further recognised the advantage of the Commonwealth in being able to mobilise expertise from all quarters of the association, in facilitating South-South co-operation and in publishing materials of direct practical relevance to practitioners in national education systems.

4.21 With these principles and advantages in mind the Working Party proposed that the Education Programme should focus on two major themes in its post-11 CCEM work. These were:

- a Improving the Quality of Basic Education – the theme of the Conference.
- b Co-operation in Higher Education.

4.22 Work on Educational Development in Small States, an area in which the Secretariat had developed recognised expertise, should continue as a sub-theme for Education Programme activity.

4.23 The working party recognised the advantages of planning the Secretariat's programmes of work in education on a medium-term plan basis. It proposed the principle of a costed five-year rolling plan starting in 1990 and recommended that the Twelfth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers should monitor progress on the basis of an evaluation report from the Secretariat and consider the balance of activities within the Plan as appropriate. This would have the benefit of enabling the Programme to develop more realistic planning and management schedules for its work.

4.24 The working party endorsed the specific proposals set down in the Secretariat's paper **Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education** (WP/B – reproduced at the end of this section of the report) but drew attention to a number of concerns and priorities which it believed should be taken note of by the Secretariat in its more detailed elaboration of project activity following the Conference.

4.25 With regard to Improving the Quality of Basic Education the working party supported the proposal for concentrating on the professional development and support of teachers. In so doing it highlighted a number of specific concerns which included:

- a Selection procedures for the teaching profession
- b The training of teacher trainers
- c Introducing continuous assessment
- d National support services for teachers
- e Training the untrained teacher
- f Improving science education at the basic level of education
- g Enabling teachers to carry out school-based research
- h Providing basic education for the handicapped
- i The importance of selecting and training headteachers

4.26 The working party took careful note of the Ministers' discussion on the impact of structural adjustment on educational policy. It agreed that subject to wide consultation the Secretariat should facilitate dialogue on this relationship. This dialogue might address how ministers of education can marshal their economic arguments in their internal, national dealings with ministries of finance; how member countries can most effectively negotiate with funding agencies; and how policies can respond to the demands of structural adjustment without jeopardising learning. This work could involve a number of programmes and divisions in the Secretariat and might benefit from the insights of a high-level Commonwealth group.

4.27 The working party endorsed suggestions from ministerial committees that within the context of the Programme's work on quality in basic education, attention should be paid to the provision of basic education out-of-school, particularly in meeting the needs of girls and women.

4.28 The working party noted the agreements which Ministers had already reached with regard to work programme activity on CHES, student mobility and the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. It was agreed that there should be wide-ranging consultation on the scope and modalities of favourable fee regimes for overseas students in order to enable the Secretary-General to report on this to Heads of Government in Harare in 1991.

4.29 In respect of small states, special attention was drawn to the needs of archipelago countries and to the importance of management reform in ministries of education.

4.30 In areas outside of the three main programme themes comment was limited to the need for the Secretariat to weigh carefully the implications of long-term involvement in exercises such as the Task Force of Donors to African Education, and to the importance of extending the Education Programme's resource base through co-operation with other agencies and organisations.

4.31 The working party also noted the work of the High Level Appraisal Group on the Commonwealth and the significance this could have for future co-operation in education.

#### **ANNEX: EXTRACTS FROM THE WORKING PAPER ON THE SECRETARIAT'S WORK PROGRAMME IN EDUCATION**

The Secretariat's proposals for the work of the Education Programme post-11 CCEM are that it should focus its activities on two primary themes:

a Improving the quality of basic education – the theme of 11 CCEM.

b Co-operation in higher education – a topic of long-standing Commonwealth importance.

In addition it is proposed that the programme on educational development in the small states of the Commonwealth should continue as a sub-theme, recognising that there will be close linkages with the two major themes indicated above.

The Education Programme should also continue to undertake a set of more general functions in support of Commonwealth co-operation in education including, liaison and collaboration with non-governmental organisations; direct advisory work on request from governments; mobilising support for teaching and learning about the Commonwealth; and a publications programme.

Work in train on entrepreneurship and on education and the environment should be completed. Given the significance which Heads of Government have placed on environmental and drugs issues, the Programme will need to continue to be responsive to calls for educational activities in these areas.

It is estimated that the financial resources directly available to the Education Programme for the five year period 1991-1996 should be in the order of £4.5 million at 1990/91 price levels. This figure includes all the money likely to be allocated to the Education Programme including salaries and overheads.

### **The Need to Focus**

At 9 CCEM, held in Cyprus in 1984, it was recognised that the Education Programme had been attempting to address too wide a range of issues. Since then attention has been focused on five or six themes or topics. With a professional staff of eight, and extremely modest core funding, this rationale remains unaltered. Although the two main themes proposed are broad in character, each provides possibilities for distinctive programmes of work which do not duplicate the work of other international organisations.

### **A Time-frame for Action**

It is proposed that the work programme post-11 CCEM should span five financial years from 1991/92 to 1995/96. There are two main reasons for extending the life of the work programme beyond the period between ministerial conferences. With ministers conferences taking place every three years, the actual amount of time available to implement conference mandates may be as little as two years. If this is allied to methodologies which stress the value of a series of sequentially linked activities (e.g. case studies, consultative meetings, attachments, training courses and publications) there are constraints placed on the effective management and evaluation of programmes within current time-frames.

If this reasoning commands itself to member countries, it is proposed that 12 CCEM monitor progress and mandate new activities but do so in the framework of a rolling five-year, medium-term plan which would be revised and re-assessed at each conference. Thus if the next conference is in 1993 this would be two years into the proposed work programme; at that time Ministers would consider a plan up to 1998.

It is proposed that three to six months after 11 CCEM the Education Programme should publish a booklet outlining its five-year programme. The booklet will be disseminated widely. It will take close account of Conference decisions. It will also reflect the need to be flexible, recognising that the Secretariat should continue to be responsive and adaptable in meeting the needs of member countries.

### **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**

This is the central theme at 11 CCEM. It is a topic which is gaining increasing international attention, political and educational. The World Conference on Education for All (Thailand, 1990) proposed national plans for basic education as important components of national human resource development strategies. The **Human Development Report 1990** (UNDP 1990) highlighted the significance of primary schooling for literacy. The **World Development Report 1990: Poverty** (World Bank 1990) emphasised the importance of primary schooling and primary health care as basic and essential components of development strategy.

As the country papers prepared for 11 CCEM show, improving the quality of basic education is of concern to all Commonwealth countries, developed and developing, large and small. The means for achieving improvement are many and relate in sometimes complex ways one with another. The

central lines of action include more effective training, support and management for teachers, curriculum reform, the provision of more and better learning materials, improved management of schools, and linking schools more closely with their community. There is a need too to be realistic and imaginative about the use of physical and financial resources. At the heart of all of this is the school and the creation of a learning environment which promotes and enhances the capacities of children. Making schools work well might summarise the purpose of the exercise.

In proposing improving the quality of basic education as one of two central themes for its work over the next five years, the Education Programme recognises that it is one relatively small actor on a stage which requires major programmes of international co-operation. In the interests of effectiveness it will be important to be selective rather than all-encompassing; active on matters which are at the heart of government policy and impinge directly on quality; and operational in ways which mobilise resources beyond those directly available to the Secretariat.

With these considerations in mind it is proposed that the Programme's work should focus on one crucial area of concern: **the professional development and support of teachers**. Teachers are central to improvements in quality. A well prepared and motivated teaching force is essential for effective teaching and learning. This requires a range of measures in support of the training and on-going professional development of teachers allied to levels of remuneration and other conditions of service which make teaching an attractive career proposition.

Whilst identifying this as central to the proposed work programme there will be an inevitable overlap with other important quality related topics including the school curriculum, improving the management of schools, learning materials and links with the community. The Conference may wish to consider the virtue of preparing a single publication which attempts to draw together in a concise and practical way the main messages derived from the documentation for 11 CCEM and the discussions in Barbados on improving the quality of basic education; a resource book which would address the full range of factors impacting on quality and not just teachers.

It is proposed that work on teachers should build on activities already in train including the HRDG joint project on improving the management of teachers in Africa, the Programme's work on the teaching profession in support of the Task Force of Donors to Africa Education programme, and the project on improving science teaching in primary schools.

### **Professional Development and Support of Teachers**

The advice of the Conference is sought on five main proposals under the rubric of the professional development and support of teachers. Four are concerned with different aspects of training teachers and providing professional support. The fifth is to do with improving the overall management of the teaching service.

While all analyses are consistent in seeing the quality of teachers as fundamental to the quality of what happens in schools, teacher education has been severely criticised in terms of its effectiveness and its cost. Initial teacher training has been a particular target for criticism. The Programme proposes to review practice and research on different approaches to **Raising the Quality of Initial Teacher Training**. This will include implications for the training of teacher educators.

Evidence exists in many countries of fresh and imaginative ways in which existing training capacity can be utilised. These include reducing the duration of pre-service training combined with in-service components, changing course structures and time allocations to upgrade the knowledge base of trainees, strengthening support and advisory services and the greater participation of schools in the training process. There is merit in sharing these experiences.

Work will be commissioned and meetings of specialists convened if this proves necessary. After this first phase, practical activities will be implemented in close consultation with member countries. This may include the production of manuals and support for regional or national training activities.

**Training and Supporting Headteachers** is critical for effective school performance. It is a topic which takes on even greater relevance when, as many countries report in their country papers to 11 CCEM, decentralisation of school management is seen as one strategy for making schools work better.

The results of a survey of training and professional support for headteachers currently being undertaken will help to indicate what kinds of potential exists for improving and extending headteacher training programmes, in perhaps new and cost-effective ways. Just as the range of strategies for offering initial teacher training is expanding so too are the ways for developing the



managerial, pedagogical and community-related skills which combine to form the work of a school principal. The Programme proposes, in the light of the survey, to develop a sequence of activities to allow the sharing of innovative experience. This will include the development of resource books to assist training organisations, and work with ministries and institutions in the preparation or improvement of programmes for training and support.

At earlier conferences ministers have repeatedly stressed their concern with learners outside school as well as with those within. That concern has led the Programme to undertake work in the previous triennium on the use of nonconventional approaches, including the use of mass media, to the education of adults and young people outside school. In preparing for the Conference the Secretariat has also commissioned studies on Commonwealth approaches to educating the estimated 25 million children of school age who are not at school. In the light of this work, and of the educational needs it has illuminated, work is proposed on the use of **Teachers and Other Resources in Out-of-School Education**. This work will take into account the role of three groups: teachers, who teach outside school as well as within; adult educators and extension workers; members of the community whose skills and experience can be used within the educational service. It will also build on the recommendations of the meetings organised by the Programme in June 1990 which identified possible lines of development for raising the quality of nonformal education. A planned sequence of activities in this area, aimed at those out of school, will complement the other proposed activities which concentrate on learning and teaching within school.

The review section outlined work undertaken over the past five years in the area of **Training Teachers for Primary School Science**. The importance of this subject for national educational development remains undiminished. Children must be exposed to science education at an early age if in later years they are to acquire the scientific and technological knowledge and skills which all countries require, but especially the poorer developing countries.

The work of the Secretariat, in co-operation with Unesco, has reached a stage where it can best be carried forward at the national or sub-regional level. The Programme will be willing to work with ministries and training colleges to help upgrade their teacher training programmes for equipping teachers with basic science teaching skills.

For five years the Programme has worked productively in improving personnel records and management procedures in a number of African ministries of education. Whilst the capacity of the Education Programme to run similar programmes elsewhere in the Commonwealth is constrained by shortage of resources the value of its work in **Improving Teacher Management and Support** has been widely recognised in Africa.

Post-11 CCEM it is proposed that the Programme will act as a facilitator for countries or sub-regions interested in developing improved teacher management procedures in their ministries. This will involve helping ministries design a programme of activities, making available resource materials generated by the project, identifying advisory support, arranging for training opportunities with the help of CFTC and collaborating with donor agencies in joint funding.

#### **Other Activities Relating to the Professional Development of Teachers**

In addition to these five main areas, work on distance education for teacher training which has been initiated in the current financial year (1990/91) will be completed in following years. Distance education has been widely used for the upgrading and training of teachers particularly in primary and junior secondary schools. Over fifty programmes or projects have been run, mainly in developing countries. The use of distance education for teacher training is of interest both to teacher trainers and to distance educators and is a technique which may be of particular value in raising the quality of basic education.

By agreement with The Commonwealth of Learning and with its support the Education Programme is undertaking a review of experience in this area. The results of this work will be available early in 1991. Future activity in this area will rest with COL: the Education Programme ready to assist as appropriate. Possibilities for work include a self-funding conference on the subject, associated with a training activity; policy work with ministries of education on links between conventional teacher training and distance education programmes; and the publication and distribution of information on methodology for ministries and teacher training colleges.

As a means of drawing some of the threads together under the rubric of the professional development and support of teachers it is also proposed to develop a series of practical publications on different aspects of the teacher's contribution to making schools work better. Some of these resource books would flow directly from the areas of activity proposed above; others would be commissioned separately and might include topics such as supervision, assessment, working with the community and conditions of service. This series would be analogous to that on the cost-effective use of resources which has proved so successful.



The proposals for work under the heading of professional development and support of teachers will be discussed by senior officials and ministers. Other proposals may come through the Conference which outweigh or have greater priority than the suggestions outlined here. They are presented for comment in order to arrive at a coherent package of activities which genuinely meet the needs of member countries.

### **Co-operation in Higher Education**

The second major thematic strand proposed for the work of the Education Programme over the next five years is co-operation in higher education. This represents a long-standing focus for Commonwealth interaction; the linchpin of educational exchange since the first imperial education conferences began in London in 1912. The rationale for maintaining this role is strong. The Secretariat and its Education Programme are in a unique position to address topics of common Commonwealth concern; at the same time co-operation in higher education remains a significant vehicle for strengthening the Commonwealth association.

Mandates for action in this area come from the highest level. Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989 reaffirmed the importance they attach to higher education co-operation in the Commonwealth as a contribution to human resource development and to increasing the scientific and technological capability of member countries. It was in this context that they welcomed the establishment of The Commonwealth of Learning, supported investigations of a collaborative support scheme to strengthen key aspects of higher education development, reaffirmed support for CSFP and expressed concern at the continuing decline in Commonwealth student mobility.

Three of the issues referred to by Heads of Government form the heart of the proposed work programme for the five year period 1991/92 – 1995/96. A fourth seeks to build bridges between higher education and the other main programme component, improving the quality of basic education.

### **Initiating CHES**

CHES is the subject of substantive discussion at 11 CCEM. Its purpose and operation will be considered by Ministers and ways forward delineated. This paper does not rehearse that discussion. It presupposes broad agreement of the recommendations of the Commonwealth Expert Group in its report **Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme: Strengthening Capacity for Sustainable Development**; should this not be the case, the programme would of course be adjusted to take close account of Conference recommendations.

The Expert Group report has suggested that in order to give an impetus to CHES certain key pilot projects and studies capable of early implementation should be undertaken which would provide a basis for identifying and designing more substantial co-operation programmes and projects. Eight potential pilot projects have been identified in the three principal areas of need identified as central to CHES: books and materials, management, and staff development.

Should the Conference so agree work will be initiated on pilot projects as soon as 11 CCEM concludes. It will be the task of the Education Programme's Higher Education Unit to co-ordinate the pilot projects and help to ensure their successful completion. In addition, in the current financial year (1990/91) a planning meeting is likely to be required for the further elaboration of the CHES programme consequent on the decisions of 11 CCEM. The initiation of CHES will form the main element of the Programme's work in higher education and will take up a high proportion of staff time.

In the first year of the new five year cycle (1991/92) it is proposed that there should be a meeting of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation (whose work was endorsed by CHOGM in Kuala Lumpur). The Committee will review and monitor the activities and progress of CHES and co-ordinate substantive projects under CHES aegis. It will be the task of the Higher Education Unit to service the Committee and in so doing, liaise with ministries, higher education institutions, international development assistance agencies, as well as with multilateral organisations and non-governmental bodies such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities. This will provide the substance of the Higher Education Unit's role in support of CHES for subsequent years.

### **Promoting Student Mobility**

The decline of Commonwealth student mobility remains an important concern. Meaningful discussion on this topic requires accurate and up to date data. The collection and analysis of

student mobility data remains a central function for the Education Programme's Higher Education Unit. No other body collects this material on a pan-Commonwealth basis. It is proposed that this work should continue and that as in the past student mobility statistics should feed into the work of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation which retains a high level monitoring role, and comments on ways and means of redressing the decline in mobility.

It is proposed that from 1991/92 a regular annual report on student mobility statistics, flows, fees and policies should be published. This will require continuing close liaison with national bodies designated as responsible for the provision of statistics about overseas students.

There are other contributions which could be made to improve student mobility among Commonwealth countries. Four possibilities include:

- a Consideration of an extension to the ERASMUS scheme to benefit students from Commonwealth countries.
- b Providing information from Commonwealth countries on split-site models which facilitate student mobility and cut costs.
- c Providing comparative experience of good practice on the treatment and support of overseas students in Commonwealth developing countries.
- d Increasing North to South student mobility.

### **Improving the Administration of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)**

The Higher Education Unit will continue to monitor the progress of CSFP and to be responsible for publishing the Plan's annual reports. New formats will be devised for the report including computerisation of the data base. As appropriate, work will also be undertaken in support of the Plan including reviews of specific aspects of its work such as the Administrative Handbook, tracer studies, updating the CSFP administrators manual, and servicing periodic reviews such as the proposed triennial review.

Since 10 CCEM the value of regular meetings allied to training and advisory activities for CSFP administrators has been demonstrated. It is proposed that consultancies to national agencies, especially those new to the Plan should continue. At their first meeting in 1988 CSFP administrators recommended that there should be regular triennial workshops to take place at the time of ministerial conferences. A one-day meeting of this type will be held prior to 11 CCEM. Subject to the success and value of that meeting it is proposed that this should be a regular support mechanism for CSFP.

### **Higher Education and Improving the Quality of Basic Education**

Improvements required to improve the quality of basic education depend in part on the capacity of higher education to provide research, training and other professional services. Many institutions already play a strong supportive role in the training of teachers, consultancy and advisory work for ministries of education and the dissemination of research findings. However much remains to be done to ensure that the work of higher education institutions genuinely impacts on the work of schools. It is proposed that the articulation of this relationship should provide the focus for one thematic piece of work undertaken by the Higher Education Unit. Special emphasis would be placed on strengthening the research and training capacity of faculties and schools of education in higher education institutions in developing countries, and on the outreach role of tertiary institutions through schemes such as national service by students.

### **Education Development in the Small States of the Commonwealth**

For the past five years this has been a separate and distinctive component of Education Programme work. It is part of the broad on-going concern expressed at Heads of Government meetings that the development of small states should be a Commonwealth priority.

It is proposed that the work initiated during the past triennium on the organisation and management of ministries of education in small states should continue for two more years. Its focus is the challenge faced by ministries in addressing a diversity of functions without the benefit of a wide array of specialists and specialist services. Are there organisational and management responses from which small systems can benefit? Over the next two years it is proposed to design and implement programmes of professional development for senior ministry managers implemented in association with the Universities of Malta, the South Pacific and the West Indies and with

Unesco and the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration. These programmes will use materials specially commissioned in the first phase of the project. Should requests arise for specific assistance in particular ministries much in the way that they have under the teacher management project, then the Programme would stand ready to facilitate advisory help.

A workshop is planned for mid-1991 to assist in the development of advisory and consultancy skills for institutes and schools of education serving an outreach function in support of ministries of education in small states. Developing the consultancy capacity of institutions serving small states using indigenous capacity will provide a subsidiary focus for project work.

The expansion and redefinition of the scope of post-secondary or tertiary education is currently of major concern to virtually all Commonwealth small states, at the policy level, in institutional development and in articulating new relationships with the wider world including regional universities and metropolitan institutions. It is proposed that this remain the second focal point for the small states programme. This would include a sharing of experience on policy options, support for institutional and staff development (some of which could fall under the aegis of CHES) and the preparation of resource books, within the **Challenge of Scale** series, to focus on specific aspects of post-secondary development such as the outreach function of post-secondary institutions, maximising the use of staff in multi-functional institutions and post-secondary college linkages with the employment market.

### **Other Activities**

The Programme will continue to work with Commonwealth professional associations and other non-governmental organisations both to take advantage of their expertise in Secretariat work programmes but also to help develop the capacity of 'unofficial' bodies in their development functions. The Programme will continue to contribute to major international education fora in a judicious way, especially in areas where the Programme has established some measure of comparative advantage (e.g. teacher management, educational development in small states, entrepreneurship). Its work as a member of the Task Force of Donors to African Education (DAE) will continue. The DAE Working Group on the Teaching Profession, which the Secretariat convenes, has recently identified a set of consultative, research and national development exercises to carry work forward, although the management implications of co-ordinating these activities will need to be weighed carefully against other priorities in the proposed work programme. The Programme will also continue to play its part in contributing to joint inter-programme activity within the Secretariat's Human Resource Development Group.

### **Direct Advisory Work**

Education Programme staff may offer direct advisory services. Thus, for example, the Director of the Education Programme is to serve on the Higher Education Commission for Namibia in 1991. Support is also to be given by CFTC and the Education Programme to the commission reviewing the University of Guyana. The Government of Malaysia has requested assistance to run a course for teacher educators on teaching values across the curriculum. Whilst the number of operations of this type may be limited by the requirements of the Programme's mainstream activities, member governments may wish to note that this is a role which the Education Programme is seeking to develop.

### **Providing a Publications Programme**

Over the past five years attempts have been made to develop series of practical and readable handbooks and resource books in areas such as entrepreneurship, teacher records, the cost-effective use of resources and **The Challenge of Scale** series on educational development in small states. These publications have been well received and it is proposed that in support of its major areas of work this should continue to be an important function of the Programme's work. Advice will be sought at 11 CCEM on the value which ministries of education place on these publications and on the **Commonwealth Education Newsletter**.

Whilst enhancing opportunities for young people to learn about the Commonwealth is necessary and desirable, the Education Programme will have to continue to play a modest supporting role in this area. It will disseminate its own publications on teaching and learning about the Commonwealth, facilitate funding and training for organisations and institutions keen on developing Commonwealth studies programmes and help ministries prepare for Commonwealth Day. However, this is really a subject which requires a major programme of activity. It is something under discussion by the High-Level Appraisal Group set up by Heads of Government in Kuala Lumpur.

The opportunity will be taken during the course of 11 CCEM to see how the Education Programme can improve its working relationships with ministries of education including how to improve its links with Commonwealth Desk Officers.

### **Resources**

Since 10 CCEM the core resources available to the Education Programme have continued to decline in real terms. As noted in the review section one professional post remains unfilled to assist the Secretariat contain costs. Funding from CFTC's allocation to functional programmes has continued to decline in real terms as have the small budgets derived from the Commonwealth Secretariat budget. The response to this difficult situation will continue to take two main forms; first, to extend the resource base through greater use of CFTC resources in support of major Programme activities, and secondly, to continue to work in co-operation with other organisations and agencies. This latter form of co-operation has been of growing significance and should remain a central strategy for Programme work.

### **High-Level Appraisal Group**

Finally 11 CCEM will wish to note that the High-Level Appraisal Group consisting of 10 Heads of Government will report to the 1991 CHOGM in Zimbabwe. This exercise involves a broad look at the future of the Commonwealth, its relevance and its purpose at the end of the twentieth century. In suggesting priorities for the Commonwealth association in the nineteen-nineties, development, human resource development and education and training will almost certainly be high on the agenda. The precise directions or redirections which follow from these discussions are likely to have implications for the work of the Secretariat in education. This will be of importance to Ministers of Education when they meet next for 12 CCEM, and may also have some implications for work programmes before then.

# Addresses to the Conference

## The Opening Ceremony

### CHIEF EMEKA ANYAOKU, COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL

Mr Prime Minister. On behalf of all of us who are visiting Barbados I would like to thank your Government for its most hospitable welcome to us and for the excellent arrangements made for this Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers. We are delighted to be here in this splendid hall named after one of Barbados' most eminent sons, Frank Collymore.

For me this is a special and significant occasion. It is my first attendance at your meeting as Commonwealth Secretary-General. For you, Prime Minister, I know that it is your third. You were present at the Sixth Conference in Jamaica in 1974 as Minister for Education and again in 1987 in Nairobi for the Tenth Conference, but this time as Prime Minister of Barbados. I trust therefore that you will allow me to congratulate you on this clearly enviable political progression.

The value and vitality of your conferences which stretch back to 1959, is amply signalled by the large number of countries and Ministers present. We have with us today over 40 Ministers and delegations from 50 Commonwealth countries and territories: a record as far as this series of conferences goes. They include representatives from Pakistan and Namibia, which have respectively rejoined and joined the Commonwealth since you last met in Nairobi in 1987. I know you would wish to join me in extending a special welcome to them.

The excellent attendance at the Conference is also, I am sure, a tribute to Barbados; to the stability and progress you have achieved since independence, to your democratic traditions, to the fabled friendliness of Bajans, and to the charm of your island. In the last century, between 1887 and 1891, King Jaja of Opobo, a traditional ruler who stood in the way of British penetration of my part of Nigeria was manoeuvred into exile to St Vincent and later Barbados. I remember on my first visit here some years ago, my excitement on learning of the local calypso recalling Jaja's name. I am sure that my people's anger at his exile and subsequent death shortly after leaving Barbados to return home, would have been a little assuaged had they known that one of the places of his enforced abode was somewhere as hospitable and beautiful as Barbados.

Your country, Mr Prime Minister, has made an outstanding contribution to Commonwealth affairs over the years. The role of Barbados confirms the truth of the saying by a French statesman that the importance of countries like men, is not to be judged by their size. In addition to the significant contributions by its Prime Ministers to the association's deliberations and decisions at the summit level, Barbados gave to the Commonwealth in the person of Dame Nita Barrow, now your distinguished Governor-General, one of the seven Eminent Persons who went to South Africa in 1986 to grapple with the question of ending apartheid through negotiations. And in the last two weeks Barbados produced in the person of Sir Carlisle Burton, one of the 12 members of the group of Commonwealth Observers who went to Malaysia to observe the just-concluded elections.

In Commonwealth education co-operation, Sir Hugh Springer, until recently your



Governor-General, was both head of the Education Division of the Secretariat and later Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General in charge of education. He went on to become the Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities where he served with distinction for several years until 1980. Thereafter, he continued to render outstanding service to Commonwealth co-operation both as Chairman of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Student Mobility and as a member of the Standing Committee on Student Mobility for most of the 1980s. I wish publicly to acknowledge our tremendous debt of gratitude to Hugh Springer and to wish him and Lady Springer many happy years in retirement.

Sir Hugh's departure from London might have left us feeling inconsolable had Barbados not already provided another star to make invaluable contributions to our work. I refer, of course, to Sir Roy Marshall, currently High Commissioner for Barbados in London. He has been Chairman of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation since its inception and a Governor of The Commonwealth of Learning of which he was also one of the principal architects. He has provided outstanding leadership to Commonwealth co-operation in education, drawing on his earlier experience as Vice-Chancellor of the Universities of the West Indies and of Hull and as Secretary of the Vice-Chancellors' Committee in Britain. I know you will want to join me both in thanking him for his contribution to Commonwealth development in education, and in congratulating him warmly on the attainment of his seventieth birthday just eight days ago. I salute you Roy and Lady Marshall and trust we can continue to count on your wisdom and support.

In retrospect, 1989 and 1990 may well turn out to have been watershed years for the international community. We have experienced traumatic political events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the most welcome beginnings of a move to abolish the obnoxious system of apartheid in South Africa, and the on-going crisis in the Middle East whose satisfactory resolution is so important in relation to the right of small states to enjoy protection and security against aggression.

For the Commonwealth too these years may prove to be a watershed, as our Heads of Government appraise the future goals of the Commonwealth and consider how it can best respond to the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. A group of ten Commonwealth leaders will meet in London in January to deliberate on the Commonwealth's future role and will report to the Heads of Government Meeting in Harare later in the same year. I am confident that this appraisal will prove seminal for further developments in Commonwealth co-operation including in the area of education. For the educational ties that bind our countries are among the strongest of Commonwealth links and are at the centre of Commonwealth co-operation for development.

The main theme of your Conference, Improving the Quality of Basic Education, reflects and responds to wider international consideration of these issues through International Literacy Year, the World Conference on Education for All and the recent World Summit on Children. There is growing awareness of the importance of human resource development in overall socio-economic progress and that the foundations for creating the scientific and technological skills that our economies need are laid far back in the early years of childhood and in primary schools. At the same time in many of our countries there is a profound dissatisfaction with the current condition of education because of the evidence that so many of those enrolled in school perform well below their capacity. Many young people presently emerge from their basic schooling without even the minimum competencies in the 3 Rs. This is true of youth in the industrialised countries as well as in developing ones.

Leaving aside the technicalities of education in which I am no expert, I would like to address myself to three broad policy observations. The first concerns the importance of political leadership and political will in creating the necessary environment of commitment and support for basic education. Partly this is a matter of funding priority in budget allocations, but it is also a matter of showing recognition and appreciation to teachers, who in all our countries, do so much in difficult conditions, and of giving them and their schools support and encouragement.

Next, I would emphasise the need for partnership: partnerships within the education sector: between staff of the ministry of education, local administrators, heads, teachers, and parents in improving education; partnerships between education and other ministries – of national planning where they exist, of local government, social welfare, and health – and also with communities, non-government organisations and businesses which can provide material and moral support to the schools; and partnerships at the international level between national governments and donor agencies.

My third observation concerns the challenge to specify as closely as possible the learning objectives that we want children and adults to attain. If educators can identify how the learner's progress can be measured and assessed in concrete terms, we will have a firmer basis for improving quality. Such learning goals should be seen not just in terms of knowledge and skills acquired, but also of moral, spiritual and aesthetic values, good citizenship, and the capacity to work together especially in societies and in a world where lingering historical prejudices founded on race, religion and culture must be redressed.

The other principal themes on your agenda address distance education co-operation and higher education. These concerns are complementary to your keynote theme addressing basic education. They too are directed to sustaining and raising quality. As the Commonwealth Expert Group has said earlier this year, higher and lower levels of education are fundamentally interdependent, the quality of one being inextricably linked with the other. Universities and colleges should be seen as a vital resource base for strengthening and improving other levels of the education system. Distance education programmes, often based in universities and colleges, have a major role to play in upgrading the quality of school teachers.

As regards distance education, you will be welcoming the creation of The Commonwealth of Learning, COL, and reviewing its early work. So much has been achieved that it is hard to believe that this initiative was only a gleam in the eye when you met in Nairobi and that it is only two years since Commonwealth governments signed the Memorandum of Understanding setting up COL. This is a development of the greatest significance and potential, which can make a major contribution to improving the quality of basic education through teacher upgrading, to expanding access to post-primary education and training, and in some cases to lowering costs.

After attending the meeting of the Board of Governors in the last few days, I would like here to congratulate those who have brought COL to fruition: most especially the Governments of Canada and British Columbia, who are hosting the institution and have provided a major part of its resources; other donor countries both great and small; the members of the Board of The Commonwealth of Learning and in particular the Chairman, Lord Briggs, who I am happy to say is with us today; and the President and staff of the institution for their hard work in getting programmes off the ground.

In higher education you will review the well-established and highly successful Commonwealth<sup>1</sup> Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and will be re-examining possibilities of sustaining and expanding student mobility. It is a continuing struggle to maintain student interchange between our countries. I beg you not to weary of the search for co-operative arrangements to establish a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students which was your expressed hope in Nairobi in 1987; continued access is crucial to the human resource development concerns and plans of member countries, and is important to the future of the Commonwealth itself.

By far the most significant new initiative on your agenda is the proposal to establish the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS). You, Prime Minister, are familiar with what is intended having spoken eloquently on the subject at the Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur last year. Since then a group chaired by Dr James Downey has put flesh on the skeleton of the proposal and this Conference will, I hope, see its way to getting the scheme off the launching pad. I would like to express our appreciation to Dr Downey and his colleagues for the invaluable work they have undertaken.

I don't need to dwell on the urgency of strengthening the basic capacity and improving the quality of higher education institutions throughout the Commonwealth, which is what

CHES will be addressing. The need for books, materials and libraries is urgent and it is ironic in this age of mass communications that higher education students remain deprived of access to books and journals. Staff development is a clear priority and staff shortages afflict our countries with particular intensity in the areas of science and technology. Already a report before you on initial projects has highlighted the possibility that a Commonwealth higher education management development service could be formed which would help member countries to draw up projects and plans and improve their capacity to allocate and deploy resources more efficiently. In all three areas – books and libraries, staff development and management – the new technologies have an important role; and here COL will be able to play its important part.

The CHES proposals are designed to mobilise a collective Commonwealth effort to address these challenges. In doing so they build upon many of the most significant advantages the Commonwealth possesses. They offer a means of tapping the resources in national systems and of mobilising co-operation between colleges and universities in developed and developing countries. They make use of the strengths of programmes of bilateral co-operation and by combining these within the framework of multilateral assistance projects, they offer to countries wider choice and an opportunity to draw on the best elements from different systems. CHES also offers a framework for increasing developing countries' own capacity and potential for helping each other: a capacity and a potential amply demonstrated by the countries of this region by making evident the important role that international co-operation in education can play.

The Caribbean provides several examples of successful collaboration which can be models for the rest of the world. The University of the West Indies where both Hugh and Roy had distinguished careers, and of which my predecessor, Sonny Ramphal, is Chancellor, is one notable example. At the school level, the Caribbean Examinations Council is outstanding in its field and has done pioneering work in curriculum development and assessment methods. Through the Caribbean Community with its Standing Conference of Ministers and its secretariat, the Caribbean countries have worked fruitfully together to improve and develop education in the region. Where better therefore than here in the Caribbean to chart the course of Commonwealth education co-operation for the 1990s?

**THE RT. HON. L ERSKINE SANDIFORD, PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS AND  
MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

It is indeed a great honour and a pleasure for me to welcome this illustrious gathering of educators, on the occasion of the Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers. On behalf of the Government and people of Barbados I warmly welcome you to our island home.

I am particularly pleased at the presence here today of so many representatives of Caribbean states and territories.

I also repeat the welcome given by the Minister of Education to the delegations of Namibia and Pakistan, whose participation can only but strengthen the institution.

I hope that the organisers of this conference have been considerate in preparing the work schedules, and that you will be able to sample our Barbadian hospitality in due measure. I know that we will be unable to match the splendid hospitality extended to me and my delegation when we attended the Tenth Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, three years ago, but we will nevertheless try to make your stay as comfortable as we can.

I extend a very special welcome to those of you, delegates, spouses and observers, who may be visiting Barbados for the first time. I hope that you will find this Barbadian and indeed Caribbean experience rewarding.

I take this opportunity to offer very sincere congratulations to the new Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku. We pledge our continued strong support for the Secretariat under the wise, perceptive and dedicated leadership for which you are well known. To the outgoing Secretary-General Sir Shridath Ramphal, I publicly say thanks for

his most invaluable contribution to the development of the Commonwealth in the role of Secretary-General.

You, the Commonwealth Education Ministers, are meeting here in Barbados under the aegis of the Commonwealth, that unique international body whose only constitution is the freely expressed will of its members to work together for the common weal, and whose only objective is that the flame of freedom should burn eternally and undimmed in pursuit of the liberty of the individual, the equality of all citizens irrespective of race, colour, creed or political belief, and the right of people to have open opportunities to contribute to the development of their societies through full participation in the democratic process.

Co-operation in education has been one of the more enduring processes through which the Commonwealth ideal is being transformed into reality. Significant resources have been directed towards the tertiary level of education. There is however a growing recognition that co-operatively the Commonwealth should direct greater attention to the primary and secondary phases of education as part of a more balanced approach to the development of education.

There is also a growing recognition that countries, particularly developing countries, cannot continue automatically to increase expenditure on the education sector, unless the economy as a whole is generating the revenues to support those expenditures. The availability of such revenues become even more problematical when the world economy is slowing down, and when external shocks further exacerbate the situation.

The world economy is in such a condition. In its recently published **World Economic Outlook**, the International Monetary Fund notes that after several years of rapid expansion which brought many countries to historically high levels of resource utilization, the growth of the world economy in 1990 is projected to slow, compared with 1989. I had previously predicted that this would happen; and it is happening before our very eyes, as downward economic indicators in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia are revealing. The Gulf crisis has come on top of that trend and is impacting to make the world economy even more sluggish.

What are the implications of current world economic trends for the education sectors in the countries of the Commonwealth?

First, there must be a greater realisation that the education sector is in competition with other sectors, including trade, industry, manufacturing, agriculture, services, public works, housing and health for scarce financial resources. A high level of understanding and perception of the national and international milieu in which the financial provision for education takes place is essential for both leaders and led in the education sector. Otherwise inappropriate stances and actions may be taken which may be harmful to stability and progress.

Secondly, the education sector must seek through greater efficiency to maximise the returns from every dollar that is currently allocated to the sector. No one, I think, believes that we are currently utilising each dollar in the education sector with maximum efficiency.

Thirdly, the education sector must ensure that there is a nice and fine balance between the quantity of education that is available, and the quality of education that is provided in the countries of the Commonwealth. Both quantity and quality education must be delivered if as members of the Commonwealth we are to live up to the ideals of the Commonwealth. Unless there is a school place for everyone, no one can claim that we have attained the goal of equal opportunity for all. Unless quality education is exchanged between the teacher and the taught, no one can claim that each individual is being empowered to realize his or her full potential.

All of this means, I am afraid, a significant re-ordering of priorities in education during the remainder of this decade of the nineties. This does not mean that everything in education must be changed, for there is very much that is sound. On the other hand, change cannot come about without changing some of the existing practices, and that will upset those who are comfortable with existing practices. Perhaps that is why the selected theme of this Conference, namely, **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**, is so very germane to the



theme of my address. I am using the term Basic Education to refer to that phase of education which embraces the primary and first cycle of secondary education in the formal school system, or in equivalent out-of-school education, including adult and continuing education. I am using the term to include instructional programmes in language skills, mathematics, natural science and the social sciences.

It is my view that basic education in this sense must not be taken to be synonymous with education in English and mathematics alone. These are fundamental subjects and must be allocated time in consonance with their overriding importance. But if, as the Inter-American Committee on Education, Science and Culture (CIECC) has said, basic education is concerned with offering "educational opportunities to all, based on abilities and aptitudes, providing them with the fundamentals of knowledge, skills and attitudes adequate to the conditions of their environment, whether rural or urban, agricultural or industrial", then it follows that time must be found on the curriculum for other subjects as well.

The education sector must find a way of delivering the subjects of communications skills and mathematics in all of their importance and diversity, while leaving sufficient time for other important subjects as well. A place must be found for the inclusion of appropriate learning experiences in such areas as health education, the arts, international understanding, civic consciousness, economics and issues of development. The educators must also find a way to include on the curriculum appropriate learning experiences in the areas of religious education, morals, family life education, ethics and values. I know that the cry will go up about an overcrowded timetable. But if our students are to emerge from school into the working world as functional adolescents, they must be exposed to the appropriate experiences in the formal educational system, which must play a part, I do not say entirely, in helping to shape the outlook of the student.

The education sector is not a set of institutions set apart from the problems of the real world. It is part of society, and as such it must be dynamic, responding to changes in the society of which it is a part. If this is so, and if the world is experiencing a breakdown of traditional and approved values, if there is growing indiscipline, lawlessness or gang activity among the youth, if there is increasing use of illicit drugs, then the formal education system must respond in a way that it is best suited to respond.

There has been much misunderstanding about how best to apply discipline in the school setting. There are those who talk about the past as the age of discipline and it is always described as "the good old days". It was a time when the strap, tamarind rod, or ruler was applied with frequent regularity to the seat of feelings of some errant student.

I myself believe that there should be a strong regime of discipline in our school system. I believe that such discipline is a sine qua non for the teaching and learning process to take place. But I certainly do not believe that every teacher should be wielding the rod of correction. That should be a function left to the senior teachers on referral. I believe, however, that there should be available to each teacher a memorandum or booklet on the appropriate disciplinary actions which may be imposed in different situations.

I certainly believe too that the highest form of discipline is the self-discipline of the individual. If the education sector is able to turn out students with a greater measure of self-discipline, then our societies across the world would become more disciplined in the homes, on the playing fields, at the work places and elsewhere.

It is my view that the quality of basic education can significantly improve through curriculum development and assessment strategies. Many of the problems in the education sectors of our countries relate to problems about the curriculum and its implementation. In the early 1970s we in Barbados established a National Curriculum Development Council to advise on a national curriculum and its implementation. Because of the need, as I said, to re-order priorities, we in Barbados will be restructuring the National Development Council and giving it the necessary resources and support staff to carry out fully its mission of ensuring that a national curriculum for all subject areas, at all levels, and for different attainment groups, will be available for use in our schools. Much work has already been done in this area, but much more needs to be done.



In addition, Barbados is also collaborating with other countries of the Caribbean and Latin American region in a multi-national curriculum project in basic education. This project has as one of its major objectives, "the design and application of a flexible curriculum allowing for instruction and learning processes that respect variations in types of intelligence, learning styles, disabilities and limitations".

From Plato to Dewey the basic discussion of education has tended to revolve around questions such as:

"What is true knowledge?"

"By what methods should this knowledge be imparted?"

"What moral laws govern human life and how can they be learned?"

"How do the answers to the above questions change the quality of a person's life?"

The task undertaken by this conference is by no means an easy one. As you exchange ideas during your deliberations, the geographical differences that separate us will fade into insignificance when it is realised that there is common ground in the basic problems we all have to face. The situations and solutions may vary from country to country in terms of resources – financial, human, social or otherwise. And for some, the quantitative aspect of basic education may still take precedence over the qualitative aspect. But in the end, as I said, we are on common ground.

I note that in addition to the topic of improving the quality of basic education, you will among other issues, review the trends in Commonwealth Student Mobility and the possibility of putting it on a growth path. You will also trace the progress of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, and examine the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme with a view to strengthening its capacity for sustainable development, as well as review the development of The Commonwealth of Learning, the proposal in relation to distance education which I had the honour to speak on at our last conference in Nairobi, and which I also had the honour, when I met with my fellow Heads of Government in Vancouver, Canada, of persuading them, without any difficulty at all, to establish The Commonwealth of Learning, which I am happy to hear is doing so well at this early stage of its development.

These topics are all relevant to the stated theme of **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**. For if we consider education as a life-long activity, then the success of the ventures in higher education will depend largely on the basic structure of education itself as conceptualised in the individual countries that make up the Commonwealth.

The quality of basic education must be relevant and solid – relevant enough for the present, and solid enough to withstand the flexibility that will be required for adjustment in the future.

The improvement of the quality of basic education should be given higher priority in our Commonwealth co-operation efforts. Donor agencies should be encouraged to continue their efforts in financing and training personnel from within the Commonwealth region. In so doing, the existing programmes could focus more on the qualitative enrichment of teacher-training and teacher support systems.

I would like to believe also that at the Commonwealth level continuing education will play a greater role in the delivery of basic education and in education generally. For education, both formal and nonformal remains the key to the training and development of our human resources. And it is our human resources which are focal to the mobilization and utilization of all other resources for development.

Finally, fellow educators, my hope is that, as a result of your discussions here an appropriate set of strategies for improving the delivery of quality education throughout the Commonwealth will be devised. My only regret is that I cannot join in your deliberations.

**THE HON. CYRIL V WALKER, M.P., MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE,  
BARBADOS**

It is my pleasant duty on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados to welcome all of you to the Eleventh Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers held in our fair island.

A special welcome is extended to Namibia which has recently joined the family of Commonwealth nations after a long struggle to achieve its independence and is attending its first Conference of Education Ministers.

I acknowledge too the presence of Pakistan which is attending its first Education Ministers Conference since its return to the Commonwealth.

We appreciate the presence of all countries represented here today, the largest group to attend an Education Ministers Conference, and look forward to your participation in the meetings and the sharing of ideas, which, I am confident, will be of direct benefit not only to your own countries, but the Commonwealth as a whole. I sincerely hope that during your stay with us, you will feel free and find time to interact with the Barbadian people and enjoy our hospitality.

Barbadians extend to each and everyone of you the hand of friendship which is characteristic of our people, not because we are a tourist destination, but because it is within the tradition and the spirit of the Commonwealth family of nations to do so.

These Conferences not only provide us with an opportunity to renew acquaintances and friendships, but also to forge new ones. More importantly, they serve the fundamental purpose of strengthening the bonds of friendship and co-operation that exist between our countries, scattered as we are in distant regions of the globe, and they hold us together as equal partners in our efforts to improve the socio-economic well-being of our people.

This Commonwealth family of nations is made up of some fifty countries of diverse background and culture. The Commonwealth is a unique international organisation whose strength lies in the spirit of goodwill, and a unity of purpose underscored by the equality of all member states regardless of size or level of development. It is this spirit which brings us together today to deliberate and take decisions on the issues which will form the agenda of our conference.

The Commonwealth has always been in the forefront of the search for solutions to world problems. It has been guided in these efforts by a strong belief in international peace, liberty and equality of rights for all people regardless of race, colour, creed or political persuasion. Its stand against racial prejudice and discrimination, and particularly apartheid in South Africa, is well known.

We in the Commonwealth would like to believe that our decision at the Nassau Summit which led to the sending of a team of eminent persons to South Africa (including our present Governor-General, Dame Nita Barrow) was instrumental in Nelson Mandela's release earlier this year. We must hope that the seeds sown by that visit will continue to bear fruit and, in the not too distant future, true freedom will reign in South Africa, with the franchise extended to all ethnic groups.

The Commonwealth believes that the creation of a new world economic order would ensure a more equitable international society, thus reducing the imbalance between the North and the South. Unfortunately, however, the imbalance, instead of contracting is widening, with the debt burden of developing countries becoming more and more painful. In the true spirit of Commonwealth unity and brotherhood the Canadian Government has sought to assuage the pains of its neighbours by writing off their debts, and the British Government at the last Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in Trinidad followed suit by cancelling the debts of a number of Commonwealth sister countries. The co-operative spirit continues in the delivery of technical assistance programmes and scholarships, by the richer family members to the poorer members in areas such as agriculture, industry, trade and education.

The organisation has grown in its membership and scope over the years. It now comprises over fifty nations and dependencies with a population of over 870 million persons across the six continents. This global character shows the impact the Commonwealth can have in influencing world affairs and in contributing to solutions of global problems.

We are a close knit family and like any normal family we must be aware of the events that are taking place around us, and the effects they will have on the family. Within the past

year we have seen, the "democratisation" of Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and more recently, probably the most serious of all, the crisis in the Persian Gulf. Within another year or so we will see a unified Europe. These issues will touch us all in some way, and as a family we must draw on our inner strength in order to face the challenges which they impose on us.

Education is very near and dear to us and is the reason we are gathered here. It is indeed one of the oldest areas of co-operation within the Commonwealth family. We have attached great significance to education over the years because of its cultural and developmental value. It is the one medium by which many of our people have been able to elevate themselves in the socio-economic order of things

At the Tenth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Nairobi the emphasis was focused on matters relating to vocational education. The challenge then was to determine a means for formal education to complement the training and preparation of our youth for effective participation in future careers in a world of rapidly changing needs and aspirations. An increased focus on more technical and vocationally oriented education was a direct result of the deliberations of that Conference.

Here in the Caribbean we have developed modules in technical/vocational education with the assistance of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. These modules are now in use and after evaluation of the project, we expect to find that the results are positive.

This, the Eleventh Conference has as its theme **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**. It may seem that we have moved from one end of the spectrum to another, but is only fitting, that if we in the Commonwealth hope to raise educational quality, we must be prepared to constantly evaluate the education being provided at the formal and informal level. In addition, there is not a more appropriate time to select such a theme than in this International Literacy Year.

If our citizens are to be useful and worthwhile contributors to the development of their countries, it is our duty to review our systems and policies and, as required, adopt new programmes or adapt or renew old policies to equip them in all ways not only for the nineties but beyond and into the twenty-first century.

Education in the Commonwealth has expanded dramatically over the past quarter of a century, and most countries can boast of over 80 per cent attendance of primary school students. Our focus today is not only with the finding of places for children, but with improving the quality of instruction provided both within the schools and in out-of-school programmes. This will require growth and development of the present resources, such as the curriculum, teacher education, teaching equipment and sound values from our administrators, teachers and parents.

Basic education is generally seen as encompassing the work of the primary and lower secondary stages of education up to about age 14, when the majority of children in many countries would expect to leave school. Basic education outside the classroom is seen as including programmes equivalent to those taking place in the school providing primary and lower secondary education.

The one common dimension of quality education within the system, may be the accessibility of educational opportunities to the population, and the capacity to provide and expand these educational opportunities. In your country papers each of you would have developed a thesis on the policies of improving the quality of basic education in your individual countries, and the measures you have adopted to deliver the programmes. We look forward to deliberating these issues and reaching conclusions which would make our travel here worthwhile and beneficial – that is in addition, of course, to the hospitality of our fair land.

I note that as part of the deliberations of the Conference we will also be looking at Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation. This subject is very important to all of us in the Commonwealth. This is especially so for the smaller and less developed of our members who do not have the resources to provide higher education for their citizens.

This programme provides for a free flow of students between countries, an exchange which will help to maintain vital links for the mutual benefit of all concerned. The Commonwealth Heads of Government at earlier summits emphasised that these links should be maintained at all costs, and that member countries, where possible, should try to provide additional offers for further exchanges.

I would like at this time to pay tribute to all those countries who have been generous with their pledges over the years, despite the constraints on their economic resources. The effect the Persian Gulf crisis is having on our economies, the abuse of illegal drugs by our citizens, and high unemployment amongst the youth, are issues which will pervade our deliberations, and impact on our decisions.

It is against this background that delegates should formulate their ideas, participate in the discussions, and share in the consensus for tangible solutions designed to be of mutual benefit to all our countries.

The search for improving the quality of basic education may be addressed differently by each of us. Some of us will be concerned with the fact that many of our children of primary school age are not getting a basic education, others will be concerned with broadening the base of our system to provide higher education.

We in Barbados pride ourselves on our education system. We boast of a literacy rate in the high 90s, a 95 per cent trained primary school teaching staff, over 90 per cent school attendance at both primary and secondary level; computer assisted education at both primary and secondary schools.

Efforts are being continued to improve the quality of education of our people, despite changing requirements and limited financial resources. One of the most recent is a programme of continuing education especially geared for young school leavers.

At the last Conference of Education Ministers, when the emphasis was on vocational education, it was realised that the biggest problem for most countries was the lack of resources to provide suitable facilities – including equipment and materials – and sufficiently trained personnel to teach the programmes. This did not make the delegates' task easy.

Today's challenges will not make your task any easier. We may rest assured that whatever solutions we propose, many people of this Commonwealth of ours are depending on us. We look forward to the outcome of this conference with much expectation. I am confident that this week's deliberations will prove very beneficial.

## **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**

### **LEAD SPEECH BY THE HON. FAY CHUNG, MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, ZIMBABWE**

I feel greatly honoured to have been invited to deliver the first keynote address on the theme, **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**. It is my sincere hope that our deliberations here will lead to the formulation of strategies not only for broadening access to basic education but also for improving its quality definitively.

A false dichotomy has developed in many Third World countries between quantity and quality: it is popularly believed that in a situation of limited financial and human resources, Governments must choose between quantity and quality, and that the two are mutually exclusive. This assumption is, I believe, totally unfounded. If we were to research into the development of nations as far apart as the USA, Sweden, Japan, and China, we would find that the basis for modern economic development lay firstly in universal, good quality and modern primary education and later in universal good quality and modern secondary education. In other words "education for all" is a pre-requisite for modern development. I can think of no historical example of a small educated elite being able to successfully develop a country which is dominated by a large mass of illiterate or ill-educated people.



Indeed there are numerous examples of the opposite: where the well-laid plans of the elite are misunderstood, overthrown and destroyed by those large numbers who cannot understand the rationale for change. In other words there is need for "critical mass" before development can take place, and this "critical mass" is reached when the vast majority of the population is well educated enough to understand the need as well as the technicalities for development.

Moreover quality cannot be achieved unless the full human resources available to a nation are tapped: where large numbers are deprived of education, the pool from which high level talents can be developed becomes very limited.

Last but not least, the modern state must be built on professionalism and merit, rather than on family or ethnic links as in traditional medieval states. The high technology and sophisticated bureaucracies needed today cannot be founded on patronage and family connections as in the past. Today the medieval patronage system, while it still survives in various forms in both industrialised and developing countries, is branded as nepotism and misuse of power, and it is generally agreed that major decisions must not be based on patronage but on ability, merit, technical skill and professional criteria. This trend naturally necessitates an education system which can bring to the top the best talents, even from the humblest of families.

At the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien in March this year, this same inextricable link between quantity and quality surfaced as paramount. Education for all, with specific programmes targeted towards groups which presently have limited access to education, in particular girls and women, is attainable provided that innovative approaches are adopted. Such innovative approaches as distance education and interactive radio programmes can lower the cost of education dramatically, whilst at the same time enhancing the quality.

In Zimbabwe the use of low cost innovations such as science kits and technical kits has made practical science and technology available to all up to 'O' levels. A science kit costs one fortieth that of a science laboratory, and enables a hands-on experiment based approach to science and technology. These kits have been combined with distance education materials which provide step-by-step, cookery book type of instructions for both teachers and students. The science kits have been used very successfully by unqualified and underqualified teachers who are paid between half and a third of a fully qualified teacher. The technical kits, however, have to be operated by fully qualified teachers.

Closely linked to the improvement of the quality of education is the quality of the teacher: the status of the teacher; the morale and motivation of the teacher; the conditions of service of the teaching profession; the academic and professional levels of the teacher – all these have an impact on the education system, for better or for worse. Contrary to the World Bank assertion that the quality of education is not adversely affected by the use of less qualified teachers, the majority of educationists, teachers, parents and the community tend to link quality education to highly qualified teachers. The World Bank findings are linked to a selective and narrow choice of indicators of excellence. Nonetheless it must be admitted that highly qualified teachers are very much more expensive than unqualified or underqualified teachers, and that most of us in developing countries do find it very difficult to pay top professionals the salaries they would command in industrialized countries. Zimbabwe for example may have the best paid teachers in its sub-region, but their pay is exactly one quarter of the U.S. teacher's!

This contradiction between the need for better qualified teachers on the one hand and the ability to pay them and retain them on the other hand is at the heart of the problem faced by many developing Commonwealth countries. In such a situation many difficult decisions have to be made. Whilst professional educationists accept that highly qualified teachers are essential for quality education, there may be some flexibility and adjustment regarding the number and location of these key personnel. No doubt all would agree that the school head must be of the highest quality in order to be in a position to organize resources such as community support, material inputs, the supervision and upgrading of



teachers, etc. In a small primary school, a high level headteacher may be able to orchestrate a first class education using a team of unqualified teachers, provided that there is strong community support and a generous availability of good curricular materials. This is clearly more difficult at secondary level, where a single qualified person can have a very limited impact because of subject specialisation and the greater complexity of the content and organisation. Nevertheless even at that level it is possible to have a judicious mix of highly qualified professional staff combined with para-professionals. Zimbabwe is following a policy of having a minimum of four professionals for each secondary school, covering languages; science and mathematics; social sciences; and a practical subject.

Two innovative teacher training programmes are worth mentioning from the Zimbabwean context. One is the ZINTEC or Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course, a four year course for primary teachers of which one quarter is residential and three quarters through in-service distance education. The course is not only popular but has also produced a distinctive cadre of well-qualified community-orientated teachers. This is no doubt due to the fact that they are not divorced from the communities they serve during the major part of their training.

The second programme is the Associate Teacher programme, a two year course of which six weeks are residential, to train a cadre of para-professionals for primary schools. Most of the training is done by the school head who has himself undergone an in-service course and uses a manual produced for this purpose. The para-professional is of critical importance at our present stage of development not only because he can be paid a more modest salary but also because he is very much closer culturally and educationally to the peasantry who constitute 75 per cent of Zimbabwe's population.

At this point I would like to refer to the 12 variables selected to guide the school performance review activities from St Lucia. These performance indicators can be divided into four categories: first those related to philosophy, policies and goals; secondly those related to staff welfare and staff development; thirdly those related to supervision, co-ordination and administration; and fourthly community relations. These four areas succinctly summarise what characterises quality schooling.

The first area of philosophy, policies and goals gives direction and unity to professionals as well as to parents. Success is not possible without a shared perception of their mutual enterprise.

Staff morale and welfare are critical: even with the most highly qualified staff, little can be achieved when morale is low. Alternatively lower qualified staff who are well-motivated can achieve laudable results in very difficult circumstances.

Supervision, co-ordination and administration provide the nuts and bolts which hold the system together. Unfortunately, all too often, educational administrators and supervisors receive little specialist training in this field, having been trained initially as classroom teachers. Whilst short in-service courses have their uses, there is clearly need for much higher level and more profound courses on supervision and management, linked to practical performance.

Research indicates that strong community support is a sine qua non for the achievement of qualitative education. Unless the community supports the educational enterprise both materially and morally, unless the community develops a sense of ownership and identification with the school, much of the effort will be wasted. This support needs to be built up at a political level, both nationally and at grassroots. In the final analysis community involvement at the school level is critical, as indicated by the British experience following the 1988 Education Reform Act leading to the local management of schools.

Curriculum development is another critical area for quality improvement. Moreover it is an area which can be developed centrally, using a small core of highly qualified staff at a reasonable low cost. The aim must be to ensure that the curriculum keeps abreast of modern developments universally, whilst at the same time ensuring relevance to local and

national needs. In reconciling these two sometimes opposing directions, there is need first and foremost of staff development of teachers from within the system into curriculum development theories and skills. Such teachers are more aware not only of the local ethos but also of the possibilities and limitations of the local teaching force. Moreover at all stages of the curriculum development process which may last between two and five years, it is essential to involve different levels of professionals from university lecturers and researchers, examination specialists, curriculum developers, education officers, teacher trainers and classroom teachers. A system of involvement and feedback must be developed using panels at national, regional, district and school levels as well as subject teachers' associations and teachers' unions. In addition materials must be tried out at various stages of the development period. In the final analysis the curriculum must be fully supported by all levels of education personnel who are to implement it, and at the same time its content and methodology must be such that it can be comfortably handled by teachers within the system. Without this very local ownership of the curriculum, curriculum reform may be more apparent than real.

Nonformal education must play a greater role in both providing basic education to all and in making education more relevant, qualitatively better, and if necessary at lower cost. All too often nonformal education is the cinderella of education, when in fact it has the potential to be more innovative and more cost-effective. Basic literacy and numeracy can be achieved within a few months, as compared to the many years of the conventional primary system. The basic education programme used for adults in Zimbabwe lasts three years part-time, compared to the seven year full-time primary programme. Programmes geared to enhancing agricultural productivity and increasing incomes can also prove to be very popular.

Success in the field of education must be closely linked with increased economic development and job creation. Modern education by its very nature raises expectations and creates a young population critical of both traditional values and of the ruling elite. Whilst one can see education as a worthwhile end in itself, nevertheless it is also essential to link education to adult life and particularly to the means of earning a living.

Finally I will touch briefly on the possibilities of co-operation within the Commonwealth and of support from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Probably the most valuable input would be to strengthen expertise and institutional excellence in each country. As was reiterated by so many Third World countries at Jomtien, particularly by delegates from Africa, far too much aid going into developing countries is in the form of technical assistance, that is high pay for First World experts to come to developing countries to dispense their expertise. Meanwhile Third World experts and institutions are neglected and marginalised, leading inevitably to the brain drain. More than 60 per cent of aid to education today is for technical assistance. Instead I would like to make an impassioned appeal to Commonwealth countries and to the Commonwealth Secretariat to do all in their power to strengthen experts and institutions in developing countries so that research and consultancy autonomy can be achieved. Expertise needs to be locally rooted in order to be effective in the long-term. Secondly, the area of publications and educational materials is a relatively simple area to support with high returns in terms of educational quality. Thirdly, joint projects either within a sub-region or across regions can lead to useful cross-fertilisation and mutual development. Joint research and developments projects can be mutually helpful, allowing industrialised and developing countries to gain from each other's experiences. South-South co-operation is all too rare, yet Africa and Asia, the South Pacific and the Caribbean have much to offer each other. We have much to learn from working together.

#### **LEAD SPEECH BY HON. COMRADE DERYCK BERNARD, MINISTER OF EDUCATION, GUYANA**

When I returned to Guyana from the World Conference on Education For All in Jomtien, I duly informed my colleagues that much valuable work had been done in creating a new vision for the cause of improving the provision of basic education and in creating an environment which could generate a greater sense of urgency on the part of national and

multinational institutions. However, I must confess that there has developed amongst my colleagues and critics a widespread scepticism that has arisen from two circumstances. First of all, there appeared in a prominent and distinguished international magazine an article alleging that Pattya is the sin capital of the Far East if not the world. When it became known that Pattya was the nearest town to the Conference Centre of the World Conference, it gave rise to the unworthy suspicion that the world's leading educationists did not go to Thailand to address their minds earnestly to the problems of basic education, but rather took the opportunity for disporting themselves in the flesh pots of Pattya, indulging in massages and other forms of non-educational activity. As we all know, this was not the case and it is unfortunate that malicious suspicion has descended on the otherwise unblemished character of many a Minister of Education and many a distinguished Chief Education Officer.

The second reason for scepticism is the fact that I have been unable to demonstrate any tangible contribution to the problems of basic education in my own country and to explain in precise terms what benefits will accrue from the Declaration produced at that conference.

You will recall that among other things, we agreed that, "Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults. To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded, and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparities". We also agreed that "National, regional and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organisational requirement for this task". How true!

There is a profound conundrum which faces developing countries grappling with the dilemmas of education planning and the economics of education. Whilst it may be true that our capacity to invest in education holds the key to our path to sustained economic development, it is also true that the performance of our economies holds the key to the sufficiency of resources for the development of education. You will recall the wise comment of the President of the World Bank: "Ministers of Finance, as well as those working in development banks, should be pleased to note that education produces substantial value for money. This is reflected both in national accounts and in individual earnings. As people are educated, earnings grow, so do savings, so does investment, and, in turn, so does the well-being of society overall".

In many of our countries, however, the overriding factor in the economics of education is not the causative link between investment in education and development, but rather the causative link between economic difficulties, economic policy and restrictions on spending in education. Educational policy in underdeveloped countries, perhaps in all countries, is always constrained by the apparently unlimited requirements for investment in educational capacity and the obviously restricted financial capacity to meet these requirements. The cost of increments in spending on education is the restriction of spending on other key sectors or the violation of critical targets for cuts in government spending. Increased cost recovery provides little additional flexibility. For many countries, macro-economic problems such as falling export earnings from major commodities, massive international and internal debt, falling real income and levels of welfare, and deteriorating fiscal conditions have imposed severe limitations on the freedom and the capacity to invest in basic education.

It is also painfully clear that the range of strategies normally prescribed as necessary pre-conditions to the resolution of macro-economic problems through the processes of structural adjustment have a devastating impact on education. Whatever may be the macro-economic merits of structural adjustment policies in the long-term, in the short-term the inhuman face of structural adjustment includes deteriorating living standards for teachers, restrictions on the maintenance of educational infrastructure, shortages of teaching and learning material and forms of deprivation for marginal groups in the society which restrict their access to basic education.

In this context, therefore, it was sad to note the profound absence of consideration of macro-economic issues, particularly as they are affected by current thinking on the

economics of structural adjustment as understood by Ministers of Finance and by multilateral financial institutions. Ministers of Education know that in the environment of reducing fiscal imbalances and the achievement of so-called realistic exchange rates, education is one of the first sectors to suffer. Until we are able to subsume a realistic analysis of fiscal economics within our framework of basic education for all, education planning may be an exercise of futility. The gap between our words and our deeds is ever widening. It does appear that the current level of our analysis is one which attempts to circumvent the issues of just how can we realistically garner the resources required to halt the deterioration in our systems of basic education. In the excitement of Jomtien, we believed that a world environment existed in which resources devoted to preparation for war could be diverted to education but our naive hopes on this matter have been dashed by events in the Gulf. Would it not be wonderful if a fraction of the resources mobilised for these noble causes in the Gulf could be mobilised for text books, school buildings and microcomputers in Third World countries. In the absence of a real and urgent diversion of resources to education at a national and international level, education planning is really an exercise in damage limitation. Nevertheless, we cannot afford the luxury of despair and in the spirit of an expanded vision and a renewed commitment we in the Caribbean have been facing the challenges of providing quality basic education.

In the Commonwealth Caribbean, the issue of access to basic education does not take on the popularly conceived dimensions. Very few Caribbean member states have substantial or deep-rooted problems of illiteracy since almost all of our countries have long histories of universal access to basic education. For most of our countries the issue of the education of girls is not as serious a problem as the falling enrolment and drop-out rates amongst boys. The problems of basic education in the Caribbean can be summarised under four headings. First, in the Caribbean we recognise the requirements of our economic development demand higher and wider levels of skills from the graduates of our primary education system. The manpower requirements of our economies dictate that in the near future the children who are the output of our basic education system should be computer literate, should be multi-lingual, and should have a relatively high exposure to science and technology. Second, even if the pressures of manpower development did not so dictate, the people of the Caribbean have high and rising expectations from basic education.

Our people are fully aware of the techniques, the technologies and the content of education in the developed countries and have always prided themselves that our basic education system should be comparable with the best in the world. They therefore expect their Governments and the education systems to be able to provide basic education of the highest standard and are uncompromising in this expectation. Both of these pressures, i.e. the pressures of manpower requirement and popular expectation means that education systems in the Caribbean are now allowed the luxury of congratulating themselves on avoiding mass illiteracy. The requirements of our economic growth and survival, and the popular will dictate that we in the Caribbean are striving for high and rapidly rising standards. The third set of concerns which are of overwhelming importance in the Caribbean is the problem of basic education for non-academic children. In the Caribbean we have had a history of high achievement in academic education but inadequate output in the other aspects of basic education. Indeed, many education planners are convinced that primary education in the Caribbean is so academically oriented that it is hopelessly locked into examinations biased towards the aptitudes, interests and career prospects of, at best, one third of our population of school age. For the rest of the population, our basic education system is often irrelevant and in some circumstances dysfunctional. All of our education ministries have been battling with the challenge of providing adequate pre-vocational and vocational training and developing programmes in the important life skills. The fourth set of concerns in some Commonwealth Caribbean countries involves the evidence of falling standards of attainment. The evidence in many countries show that by objective standards we are not achieving overall levels of quality in literacy and numeracy which we should expect given our long history of basic education and small sizes of our societies. It does appear that the gap between the best students in the best schools and the weak students in the average schools is widening. There is a complex plethora of explanation and causes for this phenomenon including changing cultural patterns,



problems in the teaching profession and our economic circumstances. This issue adds to the burden on our education systems since we now need to allocate more resources for remedial and literacy programmes to combat the impact of this inefficiency in basic systems.

In the Caribbean we have faced these issues individually and as a regional group. In 1988 the Standing Committee of Ministers of Education of the Commonwealth Caribbean commissioned a study on the future of education by a group of our leading thinkers in education, to provide guidance on shaping our vision on the future of education. The Advisory Group on the Future of Education in the Caribbean has been working assiduously on the environment within which education must function, the problems of efficiency and output particularly literacy and numeracy and approaches to dealing with these concerns. The group considered aspects of curriculum reform, teacher education, administration and opportunities in communication.

In Guyana we have also been responding to these challenges. In 1987, we established an interactive process of educational policy review which sought the input of the teaching profession, the academic community, community representatives and political groups. This review resulted in a policy document which formed the basis of our programme for education reform. The policy document has focused on four areas of policy reform namely:

- 1 Preserving and extending equality of access to educational opportunity, particularly through programmes in education in hinterland and indigenous communities.
- 2 Improving efficiency and education management through programmes of administration and through extension of community support for education.
- 3 Revising the instructional programme to meet the needs of economic development.
- 4 Reforming the pre-service, on-the-job, and close-to-the job training of teachers.

Out of this process has emerged a wide variety of projects and strategies for dealing with a difficult environment including low cost textbook production, discard material in making audio-visual aids, alternative forms of school financing, greater utilisation of the classroom in developmental work and new programmes in recruitment and training of teachers.

You will of course notice that the areas of concern, both at the regional and national levels, are universal and are very similar to the worldwide perceptions and conceptions as they emerged in Jomtien. Whether this should be a source of comfort or whether it should make us suspicious is another matter. There are several questions which spring to mind.

- 1 Are education systems in danger of hiding from their complex difficulties behind declarations and rhetoric?
- 2 If teachers in basic education systems are going to achieve the noble targets which we have set them, how can we convince them that the profession is important when they are so badly paid?
- 3 What are all our brilliant ideas going to cost and how are we going to pay for them?
- 4 If we truly believe that investment in human resources pays dividends, how will we convince our Cabinet colleagues and our friends in multilateral institutions that education programmes should remain intact even if there is talk of world recession and even if there is a Gulf crisis?

Finally I would like to suggest that we may wish to give consideration to ways in which the Commonwealth may be of service in the job of improving basic education:

- 1 Could we derive a mechanism for sharing information on key issues? For example, I believe that many of us have made progress in such areas as low cost text book and audio visual material production and it would be helpful if we could have information on each others projects and where appropriate, samples for illustration of successful work. I would like to suggest that there is great need for sharing specific technical



information. For example, I was surprised at how difficult it was to acquire first hand information on education plan formats and cost-recovery approaches. Perhaps the Secretariat could establish a clearing house facility in designated areas of technical importance?

2 We should examine the feasibility of greater technical co-operation specific to basic education and in particular seeking funds for the sharing of experienced professionals for specific short-term assignments in other countries.

## **Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS)**

### **LEAD SPEECH BY PROFESSOR JAMES DOWNEY**

I have come to speak to a report which, in a crucial area of development assistance, will help us do better what we already do well, to do well some of what desperately needs to be done, and to do so, at least in the short run, principally through a re-ordering of current resources.

Before speaking to that report however I should like very briefly to sketch in its provenance.

Throughout the 1980s the Commonwealth association had a Standing Committee on Student Mobility whose task it was to recommend ways of achieving greater intra-Commonwealth student mobility at a time when escalating foreign-student differential fees were inhibiting such movement. It was, to say the least, a difficult and at times discouraging task. Then in 1987, with the blessing of both the Ministers of Education and the Heads of Government, at their respective meetings that year, the Standing Committee modified its name and sharpened its focus on the design of substantive proposals for higher education co-operation. It was understood that any such proposals were to be framed in the light of existing programmes sponsored by Commonwealth bilateral and multilateral agencies. In its sixth report, **Progress Through Co-operation**, presented to Commonwealth Heads in Kuala Lumpur in 1989, the Committee proposed the establishment of a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS). The Commonwealth leaders requested the Secretary-General "to convene a meeting of principal donor agencies and selected representatives from developing countries to consider the possibilities in detail and submit a report for consideration by the next Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in 1990." Well, here you are, and here we are.

The names of those who accepted the invitation of the Secretary-General to come to London in June to put some flesh on the bones or I suppose more appropriately some pieces on the board of CHESS are listed at the back of the report. Needless to say, it was indeed an expert group, with the possible exception of its chairman, who is still puzzled as to why he was chosen but who has long since learned not to look gift horses in the mouth, or any other orifice for that matter.

Included in the Expert Group were representatives of the major Commonwealth donor agencies (ODA, CIDA, AIDAB) as well as from some of the associations and institutions who would be major stakeholders in CHESS, including: Professor S K Agrawala, Secretary, Association of Indian Universities; Professor Grace A Alele-Williams, Vice-Chancellor, University of Benin; Dr Geoffrey Caston, Vice-Chancellor, University of the South Pacific; Dr Anastasios Christodoulou, Secretary-General, Association of Commonwealth Universities; Sir Keith Hunte, Pro-vice Chancellor and Principal, Cave Hill Campus, University of the West Indies; Professor Walter Kamba, Vice-Chancellor, University of Zimbabwe.

Present also, as participating observers, were representatives of Unesco; Rockefeller Foundation; Ford Foundation; and the European Development Fund. The latter group had been invited to see what hospitality might exist among non-Commonwealth agencies for a multilateral initiative like CHESS. We were much encouraged by their response, a response entirely consonant with that articulated here yesterday by the Assistant Director-General for Education of Unesco.

One member of the group, however, deserves special recognition as the principal architect of this plan. I refer of course to Sir Roy Marshall. In his opening remarks on Monday, the Secretary-General paid eloquent tribute to Sir Roy. I cannot improve on that encomium, except perhaps to add that, as it bears on CHESS, Sir Roy is not only our grand master but a knight who, knowing the importance of both the black pieces and the white, will continue to be an important player in it.

CHESS – the concept, as distinct from the proposal we shall presently consider – rests upon three assumptions which may almost be described as principles:

1 Human resource development is central to the self-sufficiency and prosperity of all nations. The nation that cannot create its own intellectual infrastructure and its own scientific and technological capability cannot in the end escape poverty and dependence.

2 Higher education is essential to the creation of that intellectual and technological infrastructure. It is, I believe, a false and dangerous dichotomy that sets basic education and literacy on the one hand over against higher education on the other in competition for scarce resources. In its recent report, **The Dividends of Learning**, the World Bank puts it well if unpoetically when it says: "Higher education plays a crucial role in development as the source of top management professional leadership, and technical innovation. A nation looks to its colleges and universities for much of its capacity for economic and social research and for the development and adaptation of new technology." It also, I might add, looks to them for the training of the teachers who play the most vital role in basic and post-basic education.

3 If universities and colleges in developing countries are going to be empowered to meet the enormous challenges that confront them and their societies, there must be more extensive and effective co-ordination of available resources and greater co-operation among the resource-providing agencies, including the national and non-Commonwealth as well as Commonwealth donors. The Expert Group's mandate caused it to focus on co-operation among donor agencies, but we were conscious that the most important commitment to improve efficiency and quality in higher education is that which comes from the institutions themselves and of their governments. All other efforts, no matter how well-conceived, must be ancillary and complementary to that commitment.

The principal objective of CHESS and of the activities it will, if approved, give rise to, is to build local capacity and to develop local institutions. Such institutions, as we say in our report, "must be rooted in the local society, supported eventually with local resources, and nurtured by local culture and values. This implies that the actual location of co-operative project activities should increasingly be in the developing countries, using local facilities and staff to the maximum extent possible". (This is a point that, with reference to basic education, was so tellingly made on Monday by the Minister of Education from Zimbabwe, and so tellingly reaffirmed yesterday by the Minister from Uganda).

It is perhaps important to remark at this point that many developing countries have made a considerable investment in building and sustaining their higher education institutions, sometimes in the face of daunting financial difficulties. And the institutions themselves have made substantial developmental strides, again in the face of similar difficulties. There has, for example, been impressive expansion of both total enrolments and of the proportion of young people finishing secondary school and going on to some form of tertiary education. Subject offerings have been diversified and have become generally more relevant to local social, cultural, and economic issues. There has been substantial indigenisation of academic and administrative staff posts. All this has largely been achieved through the commitment of developing country governments themselves with essential assistance from the world donor community. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the problems which confront education in all our countries at present are several times more formidable in the developing countries. The erosion of government funding familiar to us all has left many universities and colleges in the South in quite

desperate straits. At our June meeting in London we heard some of these situations described in vivid and affecting detail. I cannot recount these to you now, but perhaps a few figures will give what Henry James used to call "solidity of specification" to my point. Between 1965 and 1985 Kenya's university enrolments increased by a factor of 10; Malawi's by a factor of 20. In the same period Nigerian enrolments multiplied 14 and Malaysian enrolments 15 times. By comparison Canada merely tripled its university population and Great Britain didn't quite double its.

These then are some of the facts, assumptions, and objectives which constituted the framework of our discussions in London. We worked of course within the three areas designed by Sir Roy's Committee for it seemed to us too that these were the categories of greatest need faced by higher educational institutions in Commonwealth developing countries. Thus we took as our task to formulate proposals and modalities for their implementation which would:

- 1 Improve the selection and supply of books, journals, and other library materials and create or enhance library information networks.
- 2 Establish better systems of institutional management and train staff to operate them.
- 3 Launch and support substantial programmes of staff development.

To add greater intellectual challenge to our assignment, we made two other assumptions. The first was that there would be no special fund for CHES. While we might expect that, if successful, CHES sponsored projects would in the future receive increased support, for the present we should work within the limited flexibility of participating donors' budgets. The second assumption followed almost as a corollary from the first: there would be no new agency created to administer CHES. Donor agencies themselves, or recipient institutions or governments, would have to assume responsibilities here. The important information-exchange and facilitation role would be played by either the Commonwealth Secretariat or by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, or, I suppose, by both, as need dictated.

Despite these restrictions, it seemed to us that joint action in some clearly defined areas would bring distinct advantages to everyone concerned. These included:

- 1 The larger pool of resources which might facilitate the undertaking of larger scale projects than individual agencies could tackle on their own (for example, a new institution or a major staff development plan).
- 2 A wider choice of inputs for recipients to choose from, thus making possible an assistance package more nearly suited to local needs.
- 3 Avoidance of unhelpful duplication, especially of donor surveys and recipient project requests.
- 4 A framework within which developing countries might themselves contribute resources and efforts, thus creating a greater sense of partnership.
- 5 Increased dialogue and shared risk-taking among the co-operating agencies.

These potential advantages seemed to us to give CHES more than a fair chance of success.

CHES then, as seen by the Expert Group, offers both a new hope and a new approach to Commonwealth support for higher education by combining the best elements of bilateral and multilateral assistance, thereby creating a vehicle of common purpose, collective commitments, and where appropriate, joint programmes. It seeks to take advantage of the strengthening spirit of co-operation that is abroad, and which has been affirmed time and time again at this conference.

Wishing to have some tangible proof of the potential the Expert Group saw in CHES, we agreed at our June meeting to launch several studies and pilot projects in the three designated categories. You have before you a report (Document 3a/C) on the encouraging

progress that has been made on these, thanks to the support of the major donors, to which the Secretary-General may be able to speak later.

There is only one further point I should like to make. It is this: institutional capacity-building is a long-term process. If CHESS is to succeed, the projects it undertakes must be realistic and sustainable. There must also be a strong, in some cases perhaps a renewed, commitment of governments in the South to higher education. In recognition of that commitment, where it exists, there must come from the donor community an assured flow of funds over an adequate period of time.

There's a story of a tourist in Ireland who, unable to find a certain stately home on his own, enlists the help of a local. When the weary tourist is finally shown its distant location, he remarks that there's still a long road to walk; to which the local replies: "Sure then 'tis a long road, but if 'twere any shorter it wouldn't reach the house now would it?"

The road to institutional capacity-building, like the road to national self development, is indeed a long road, with no proper ending. There are, however, spots along the way where one can pause, take stock of provisions, and re-group for the next advance. The Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme, I believe, offers us such a spot. I would therefore, Chairman, respectfully request that Honourable Ministers give sympathetic consideration and support to the proposal for a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme.

## **Student Mobility**

### **LEAD SPEECH BY SIR ROY MARSHALL**

Ministers of Education need no reminding that in Nicosia, Sofia and Nairobi they expressed concern about the decline in intra-Commonwealth student mobility following steep increases by host countries in tuition fees for overseas students and recommended that consideration be given to finding ways of reversing the trend. Heads of Governments endorsed these views in Vancouver in 1987 and in Kuala Lumpur last year.

Statistics show, however, that while student mobility has increased internationally, it continues to decline in the Commonwealth with the exception of students from Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. What is the explanation for the divergence, given the fact that the desire of students for overseas study and experience is the same, whether they come from within or outside the Commonwealth?

The explanation is to be found in the composition of the Commonwealth itself. Its membership includes few wealthy countries; it is under-represented among the middle income countries of Latin America, the Middle East, and East and South-East Asia; it contains some of the largest and poorest countries in Asia and Africa, and many small island states. Many are burdened with intolerable levels of external debt which leaves them with inadequate resources to maintain, far less improve and increase their own educational provision. It is not surprising, therefore, that the worse affected in the process of decline are the poorest countries in Africa and Asia.

The impact of decline upon Commonwealth relationships could be catastrophic. For student mobility has been its bedrock, as is evidenced by the number of leaders of Commonwealth countries who have pursued their higher education in a Commonwealth country other than their own. If that ceases to be so, the Commonwealth connection will weaken.

That the Commonwealth relationship is highly esteemed is clear from the policy of host countries in providing scholarships and awards to overseas students. Although they are targeted towards the advancement of the host countries' educational, cultural, diplomatic and commercial interests, a high proportion of them go to students from poor Commonwealth countries and are much appreciated and greatly valued. The fact remains, however, that fees are so high that the majority of Commonwealth students, who fail to get an award, are, and will continue to be, effectively barred from overseas study, so long as fees remain at present levels.



Nor should it be assumed that the establishment of The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the adoption of a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS) are adequate substitutes for student mobility. COL is concerned with the mobility of ideas and knowledge, not with the mobility of students – intellectual as distinct from physical mobility. CHESS is designed to restore and sustain the quality of higher education in developing countries, and in the process it can be expected to lessen the attractiveness of overseas institutions for students from these countries. Indeed CHESS is likely to become the most important factor in stimulating the movement of students from North to South, which is an objective that all Commonwealth countries support. Both COL and CHESS will thus complement student mobility: neither can replace it.

How then are we to put intra-Commonwealth student mobility back on an upward trend? I have no doubt that the answer is for governments of the host countries to do what their Heads agreed at Vancouver in 1987, namely, "in due course give consideration to the possibility of a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students".

In view of the history of full-cost fees, that is not going to be easy to achieve. But if we are to make progress in moderating their effect, it is essential to examine the basis of their calculation and possible ways of achieving their abatement. I ask your indulgence and your permission to draw your attention to some of the details.

When full-cost fees were first introduced by Britain the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) took a paper to the Colombo meeting of Education Ministers in 1980 in which it argued that such fees paid insufficient regard to both Commonwealth links and to the contributions to the intellectual aims and achievements of universities made by students, whether home or overseas and especially research students. ACU accordingly proposed that a ceiling should be placed upon fees for overseas students at 60 per cent of full cost.

That was rejected at the instance of Britain on the ground that countries like Australia and New Zealand, which were not then charging as much as 60 per cent, would be prompted to do so. Quite why the temptation would be irresistible if there was a ceiling, but otherwise if there was not, was never explained, and the inevitable has now occurred. Both Australia and New Zealand have now moved to full-cost fees.

In the result the ACU proposal was watered down to nothing more than an exhortation to charge fees at reasonable levels. Not surprisingly, this had no effect and year after year fees were raised by more than the rate of inflation.

Later the Standing Committee recommended that overseas students should be charged fees at marginal cost levels; but this foundered on the ground that marginal costs were feasible only where universities had some spare capacity. A marginal costs regime could not therefore provide a long-term solution. Interestingly enough, however, the Secretary of State for Education and Science in Britain is reported recently to be encouraging vice-chancellors to take additional home students at marginal costs.

The variety of descriptions applied to the level of fees desired by the sending countries – "ceiling", "reasonable", "marginal", "favourable" – have one thing in common. Current fees are too high.

Yet the receiving countries remain to be fully convinced. If in speaking about them I take my examples from Britain alone it is not because Britain is the only Commonwealth country with full economic fees. Both Australia and New Zealand have followed Britain's lead. I do so because I know Britain better, and Britain has provided more information about the components of full economic fees than the others. The details applicable to Britain may differ in some respects from those applicable to the other major host countries. But the underlying factors are the same and Britain is not the only target of my plea for appreciable movement from its present position.

Three elements of public money contribute to a university's resources in Britain – a teaching element which varies by subject area, but is uniform between universities; a research element which reflects the research strengths and reputation of individual universities; and a support element, varying from one university to another, for libraries, student services and recurrent and capital costs which support each student place.



There are 24 subject groups (see Annex to this address) each carrying a specified resource for each home student. The lowest is £2,200 for Law, Politics and other Social Studies: the highest is £9,400 for Clinical Dentistry, with Clinical Medicine at £8,500 and Veterinary Science at £8,100 not far behind. Business Studies comes in at £2,800, Computer Studies at £3,500 and Engineering and Technology at £4,600. By contrast, there are only three categories for overseas students: £5,000 for Arts courses; £6,630 for Science courses and £12,210 for clinical courses. These are the minimum and each is substantially higher than its counterpart for home students, in some cases twice as high.

For the university system as a whole, 65 per cent of public funding goes to teaching and 35 per cent to research. But some universities get as much for research as for teaching, and a few even more than that. Others get less than the average, in some cases considerably less.

The ratio of the support element to the teaching and research elements is not known to me.

There is great divergence of perception about the size of the disparity between fees for home and overseas students.

The universities' view is that although they have the legal power to fix the level of fees for overseas students, the exercise of that power is constrained by the requirement of government that overseas students should bear the full costs of their education. The universities are convinced that the eighties was a decade of cumulative and chronic underfunding for home students. They therefore take the position that if the price of a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students is a further reduction in the unit of resource for home students, they should not be expected to pay it.

The government denies the charge of underfunding. They say that universities have received more money for home students in real terms during the decade. In one sense this may be correct, but it does not assuage the concern of the universities. A not inconsiderable part of the extra money was provided to pay off redundant staff. The idiosyncrasies of public finance log that up as annual recurrent expenditure. So it may be, but the crucial point is that it was not provided for teaching and research: in fact, it reduced the amount available for these purposes.

The perception of the governments of Commonwealth sending countries differs yet again. They feel a sense of disillusionment that students from Martinique and Guadeloupe can go to British universities, paying home students fees, but students from Commonwealth countries cannot. They would understand more readily if Martinique and Guadeloupe students enjoyed that privilege at French universities, but are puzzled by its extension to British universities. This disillusionment is understandable, but the reality is that Britain has no choice. The Treaty of Rome imposes an obligation not to discriminate between students of the member countries of the European Community.

The governments of Commonwealth sending countries also understand that the European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Student (ERASMUS) is confined to EC members. ERASMUS provides opportunities for university students, who are nationals of an EC country, to spend a year of study in a university in another EC country. The EC bears much of the additional costs. The Standing Committee has suggested that students from ACP countries studying in an EC university should get the benefit of ERASMUS. What the ACP countries need is help from Britain in negotiating such a benefit.

The governments of Commonwealth sending countries may not yet be fully informed about the introduction of the Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies (TEMPUS) which was adopted by the Council of Ministers of the EC in May and is designed specifically to promote the development of the higher education systems in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

A start is being made with students from Poland and Hungary. British higher education institutions, while welcoming the opportunities provided by TEMPUS for promoting East/West relationships are concerned about having to bear part of the cost of teaching such students out of their own budgets and about being unable to do the same for students from other countries, particularly from developing Commonwealth countries. Neverthe-

less they have been persuaded to take 260 Polish and Hungarian students at fees of £1,675, for non-laboratory courses and £2,000, for laboratory courses plus a top-up grant of £700 from the TEMPUS authorities in each case.

The Commonwealth sending countries will view these developments with mixed feelings – pleasure that favour is being shown to the depressed countries of Central and Eastern Europe and dismay that it is being withheld from them.

Let me now state briefly the Standing Committee's perceptions of these matters. We consider it inequitable that overseas students are required to bear a full share of the research component of a university's budget. To impose such a burden upon them ignores the benefit the university, the staff and the nation gets from research. It also disregards the unequal distribution of research money in the funding of universities. A student of a subject which is rated gamma minus in the university he attends should not have to pay the same premium for the research element in that university's funding as a student in another university which is rated alpha plus for research in the same subject. You do not pay a Concorde fare for an ordinary jumbo flight.

There are equally compelling arguments for overseas undergraduates not having to pay the full costs of libraries, buildings, equipment, careers and other services. Every acquisition made by a university library, every building erected, every piece of equipment purchased increases the value of its plant and adds to the nation's permanent assets. Overseas students derive a benefit from their use during their stay, but do not share in their capital appreciation. A user fee or a rent is the most that they should be charged. And since overseas students cannot work in some host countries during the period of their study and cannot remain after completing their courses, there is no reason for them to use career services. They either know what their careers are likely to be when they go abroad for study, or continue to seek careers advice from their own country.

So we are forced to the conclusion that overseas students in some subjects at least are being charged more than the full economic cost of their courses. And we believe that if all overseas students were to withdraw from universities and they were replaced by home students at current levels of home student funding, the universities would be in a worse position than they now are.

We accordingly stress that the establishment of a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students is now urgent, but we do so in the context of the point made by Working Paper 3(b) at paragraph 15 of page 6: "It has to be recognised that the corollary of a fair fee policy for overseas students is a fair-funding policy towards higher education institutions by their governments".

The Standing Committee considers that there is no better and more cost-effective form of aid from developed to developing countries than investment in education. Experience shows and research proves that expenditure on education in all countries is the single most important factor in human resource development. It has a multiplier effect; which is real, if not precisely calculable. The developed Commonwealth countries now have an opportunity to help the less developed, which they should not allow themselves to miss.

The principle of an "intermediate" fee for Central European students having been accepted, I hope that Ministers will be persuaded that the case for a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students is now urgent. You will recall the reference which the Secretary-General made in his opening address to the high level appraisal which is being made about the role of the Commonwealth in the future. He had no doubt that it would prove seminal for further developments in Commonwealth co-operation including in the area of education. In his view, as I am sure it is in ours, the educational ties that bind our countries are among the strongest of Commonwealth links and are at the centre of Commonwealth co-operation for development.

You will recall also that Heads of Government agreed at Vancouver in 1987 that in due course, consideration should be given to the possibility of a favourable fee regime for Commonwealth students. In my submission "in due course" means "now" and "possibility" has become "necessity". I therefore urge you to invite the Secretary-General to

arrange for a report to be made to the meeting of Heads of Government in Harare in 1991 concerning the scope of such a regime and the mechanisms, financial and administrative, for making it operative.

### **Annex. Guide Prices for Teaching Home Undergraduates in British Universities**

| Academic Subject Groups * |  | £     |
|---------------------------|--|-------|
| A1                        | Pre-clinical Medicine                                    | 4,600 |
| A2                        | Pre-clinical Dentistry                                   | 5,200 |
| A3                        | Clinical Medicine  | 8,500 |
| A4                        | Clinical Dentistry                                       | 9,400 |
| B                         | Subjects Allied to Medicine                              | 4,000 |
| C                         | Biological Sciences                                      | 4,300 |
| D1                        | Veterinary Science                                       | 8,100 |
| D                         | Agriculture etc. excluding Veterinary Science            | 4,200 |
| F                         | Physical Sciences  | 4,600 |
| G1,4,9                    | Mathematics and Statistics etc.                          | 2,700 |
| G5                        | Computer Studies   | 3,500 |
| J2                        | Metallurgy   | 5,400 |
| H,J                       | Engineering and Technology excluding Metallurgy          | 4,600 |
| K                         | Architecture, Building and Planning                      | 3,700 |
| L5                        | Applied Social Work                                      | 3,400 |
| L                         | Economics, Sociology, etc, excluding Applied Social Work | 2,700 |
| M                         | Politics, Law and Other Social Studies                   | 2,200 |
| N                         | Business and Administrative Studies                      | 2,800 |
| P                         | Mass Communication and Documentation                     | 2,900 |
| Q,R,T                     | Languages and Related Disciplines                        | 2,900 |
| V6                        | Archaeology  | 3,400 |
| V                         | Humanities excluding Archaeology                         | 2,800 |
| W                         | Creative Arts  | 3,300 |
| X                         | Education  | 3,500 |

\* As defined in the Universities Standard Classification of Academic Subjects.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Conference Agenda

### Opening Ceremony

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Agenda Item 1</b> | a Election of Chairperson                             |
|                      | b Adoption of Agenda and Timetable                    |
| <b>Agenda Item 2</b> | Improving the Quality of Basic Education              |
| <b>Agenda Item 3</b> | Higher Education Co-operation                         |
|                      | a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHES) |
|                      | b Student Mobility                                    |
|                      | c Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) |
| <b>Agenda Item 4</b> | The Commonwealth of Learning                          |
| <b>Agenda Item 5</b> | Adoption of Reports                                   |
| <b>Agenda Item 6</b> | Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education  |
| <b>Agenda Item 7</b> | Any Other Business                                    |
| <b>Agenda Item 8</b> | Communique and Closure                                |

### ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

#### Opening Ceremony

The Conference will be opened officially at 0900 on Monday 29 October 1990.

#### Agenda Item 1

##### **Election of Chairperson, Adoption of Agenda and Timetable**

At its first plenary session, the Conference will elect a Chairperson, and adopt the Agenda and Timetable in the light of any recommendations which may have been made by senior officials meeting the previous day.

#### Agenda Item 2

##### **Improving the Quality of Basic Education**

The main theme reflects Commonwealth countries' concern to improve the quality of basic education as the most significant way forward in the development of human potential. The Conference will consider matters such as:

- a The major factors related to quality, recognising the diverse contexts of national education systems

b Planning and implementation issues which include the common constraints of financial, human and material resources

c Selected strategies and priorities for action based on good practice, which lend themselves to wide application in areas such as teacher education, curriculum development, out-of-school education, and education management

d Promising initiatives supported by international development programmes

e The scope for Commonwealth co-operation in addressing practical concerns and applying effective strategies for qualitative change.

The first day's discussion in plenary will be introduced by two lead speakers. On the second day, discussion will start in plenary, followed by committee deliberations on selected aspects of the main theme. The Conference will have an opportunity to review its conclusions on the final day.

### **Agenda Item 3**

#### **Higher Education Co-operation**

Commonwealth higher education co-operation in the service of human resource development has traditionally been close, despite recent setbacks in the area of student interchange. The Conference will consider three main pathways to strengthen co-operation at this level.

##### **a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS)**

Discussion in plenary will be introduced by Prof. James Downey, Chairman of the Commonwealth Expert Group on CHESS. The Conference will be invited then to receive the report of the Expert Group on CHESS and endorse its recommendation that CHESS be established; to take note of follow-up action on the recommended pilot projects; to endorse the priority areas within the CHESS remit; to give guidance on the operational modes proposed for CHESS; and to consider the future of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation.

##### **b Student Mobility**

Plenary discussion will be introduced by His Excellency Sir Roy Marshall, Chairman of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation since 1982. The Conference will be invited to take note of the analysis and conclusions of the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee and the latest trends on student mobility summarised in the Commonwealth Secretariat working paper, and to examine the scope for restoring Commonwealth student mobility and recommend further action. In the course of discussion, the Chair will invite major host countries to make proposals for revitalising Commonwealth student mobility, as requested by Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur. The Conference will also be asked to consider appropriate mandates for the Standing Committee in light of the arrangements agreed for CHESS.

##### **c Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)**

The report of the working party of senior officials on CSFP will be presented by its Chairman. The Conference will be invited to receive the report of the working party on CSFP, taking note of progress under the Plan and considering the working party's recommendations, in particular, with regard to a third ten-year review of the Plan.

### **Agenda Item 4**

#### **The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)**

Ministers will consider a report of the Conference working party on The Commonwealth of Learning, and will be invited to a) receive the working party's report on COL's activities and



offer any observations thereon, and b) approve the arrangements for retirements and replacements on COL's Board, including the modalities for identifying four countries to nominate Board members under sub-section 6(b)iii of the Memorandum of Understanding establishing COL.

#### **Agenda Item 5**

##### **Adoption of Reports**

Ministers will be asked to consider brief reports of their deliberations on the three main agenda items – 2, 3 and 4.

#### **Agenda Item 6**

##### **Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education**

The Conference will receive a report on the Commonwealth Secretariat's work in education since the Tenth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in 1987. It will be invited to give guidance on the Secretariat's activities in education, in the light of its own discussions and the availability of resources. A working party of officials will meet on 28 October and during the Conference, and will prepare a brief report on the education work programme for agreement by Ministers in their Sixth Plenary Session.

#### **Agenda Item 7**

##### **Any Other Business**

The Conference may wish to discuss additional matters, and to give preliminary consideration to holding the Twelfth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in three years' time.

#### **Agenda Item 8**

##### **Communique and Closure**

Any final communique of the Conference will be agreed by Ministers prior to closure.

## CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

|                         | AM   | PM   |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Saturday<br>27 October  |  | Conference Registration  |
| Sunday<br>28 October    | Conference Registration (continued)  | Conference Registration (continued)  |
|                         | 0900-1000  | 1430-1545  |
|                         | OPENING CEREMONY   | Meeting of Senior Officials  |
|                         | Agenda Item 1 Chair/Agenda/Timetable<br>Agenda Item 2 Main Theme Keynote Addresses/Discussion                | 1600-1900 CSFP Working Party<br>1600-1730 Work Programme Working Party                               |
| Monday<br>29 October    | 1030-1245 FIRST PLENARY SESSION  | 1745-1915 COL Working Party  |
|                         | 0900-1030 THIRD PLENARY SESSION  | 1415-1730 SECOND PLENARY SESSION   |
|                         | Agenda Item 2 (continued)  | Agenda Item 2 (continued)  |
| Tuesday<br>30 October   | 0900-1030 THIRD PLENARY SESSION  | 1415-1730 MINISTERIAL COMMITTEES   |
|                         | Agenda Item 2 (continued)  | Agenda Item 2 (continued)  |
| Wednesday<br>31 October | 0900-1245 FOURTH PLENARY SESSION   | 1415-1730 FIFTH PLENARY SESSION  |
|                         | Agenda Item 3 Higher Education Co-operation<br>Agenda Item 3(a) Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme | Agenda Item 3(b) Student Mobility<br>Agenda Item 3(c) CSFP<br>Agenda Item 4 Commonwealth of Learning |
| Thursday<br>1 November  | SPECIAL MINISTERIAL PROGRAMME (optional tour, informal discussions)  |  |
|                         | 0930-1130  | 1730-1830  |
|                         | Work Programme Working Party   | Meeting of Senior Officials (Communique)   |
| Friday<br>2 November    | 1000-1245 SIXTH PLENARY SESSION  | 1415-1630  |
|                         | Agenda Item 5 Adoption of Reports<br>Agenda Item 6 Education Work Programme                                  | Agenda Item 7 Any Other Business<br>Agenda Item 8 Communique and Closure                             |

## Appendix C: Conference Documentation

### Administrative Arrangements

Aide Memoire: Administrative Arrangements for the Conference

### Meeting of Senior Officials

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Agenda and Documentation               | SO/A |
| Note on Working Party Agendas          | SO/B |
| Conference Arrangements and Procedures | 1/D  |

### Working Party on the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Agenda and Documentation   | CSFP/A |
| Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship<br>Plan: Working Paper by the Commonwealth Secretariat | CSFP/B |
| Proposed Amendments to the CSFP Handbook   | CSFP/C |
| Update of CSFP Statistics  | CSFP/D |
| Draft Summary of the Meeting of CSFP<br>Administrators, 27 October 1990                        | CSFP/E |

### Supplementary Material

CSFP Administrative Handbook Fifth Edition  
CSFP Desk Manual  
Report of the Meeting of CSFP Administrators, 1988  
CSFP 29th Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 March 1989  
Second Ten-Year Review Report

### Working Party on the Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Agenda and Documentation   | WP/A |
| Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education                       | WP/B |
| Outcomes of Ministerial Discussions for the Work<br>Programme in Education | WP/C |

### Supplementary Material

Report of the Tenth Conference of Commonwealth  
Education Ministers, Nairobi, July 1987  
Education Programme Biennial Report, 1987-1989  
Education Programme Annual Report, 1989-1990  
Education Programme 1990 Publications Catalogue

### Working Party on The Commonwealth of Learning

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Agenda and Documentation  | COL/A |
| Commonwealth of Learning: Report to Ministers of Education 1990 | 4/B   |
| Commonwealth of Learning: Rotation of Board Membership          | 4/C   |

### Supplementary Material

Memorandum of Understanding on The Commonwealth of Learning  
The Commonwealth of Learning Annual Report 1989  
The Commonwealth of Learning Compendium of Activities, 1989 – 1990

### The Opening Ceremony

Address by Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Commonwealth-Secretary General  
Address by The Rt. Hon. L Erskine Sandiford, Prime Minister of Barbados  
and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs  
Address by the Hon. Cyril V Walker, M.P., Minister of Education and Culture,  
Barbados

## **Agenda Item 1: Election of Chairperson and Adoption of Agenda and Timetable**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Provisional Conference Agenda                           | 1/A |
| Provisional Conference Timetable                        | 1/B |
| List of Conference Documents                            | 1/C |
| Conference Arrangements and Procedures                  | 1/D |
| Session Agenda: Agenda Item                             | 1/E |
| Report and Recommendations of Senior Officials' Meeting | 1/F |

## **Agenda Item 2: Improving the Quality of Basic Education**

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Agenda and Documentation  | 2/A           |
| Improving the Quality of Basic Education:<br>A Background Paper by the Commonwealth Secretariat | 2/B           |
| Improving the Quality of Basic Education:<br>An Overview of Country Papers                      | 2/C           |
| Guidelines for Ministerial Committees   | 2/D           |
| Country Papers – Volume 1   | 11CCEM/2/CP 1 |
| Barbados  |               |
| Britain   |               |
| The Gambia  |               |
| Ghana   |               |
| Country Papers – Volume 2   | 11CCEM/2/CP 2 |
| Cyprus  |               |
| Guyana  |               |
| Kiribati  |               |
| Malawi  |               |
| Malta   |               |
| Seychelles (with an addendum)   |               |
| Swaziland   |               |
| Country Papers – Volume 3   | 11CCEM/2/CP 3 |
| Dominica  |               |
| Malaysia  |               |
| New Zealand   |               |
| Papua New Guinea  |               |
| Sri Lanka   |               |
| St Vincent and the Grenadines   |               |
| Zambia  |               |
| Country Papers – Volume 4   | 11CCEM/2/CP 4 |
| Falkland Islands  |               |
| Grenada   |               |
| Jamaica   |               |
| Mauritius (plus The Mauritius Case)   |               |
| Montserrat  |               |
| Trinidad and Tobago   |               |
| Country Papers – Volume 5   | 11CCEM/2/CP 5 |
| Brunei Darussalam   |               |
| Canada  |               |
| Kenya   |               |
| Uganda  |               |
| Country Papers – Volume 6   | 11CCEM/2/CP 6 |
| Antigua and Barbuda   |               |
| Bermuda   |               |
| India   |               |
| St Kitts and Nevis  |               |
| Turks and Caicos Islands  |               |

|                             |                |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Country Papers – Volume 7   | 11CCEM/2/CP 7  |
| Botswana                    |                |
| Namibia                     |                |
| Pakistan                    |                |
| Country Papers – Volume 8   | 11CCEM/2/CP 8  |
| Nigeria                     |                |
| St Lucia                    |                |
| Tanzania                    |                |
| Zimbabwe                    |                |
| Country Papers – Volume 9   | 11CCEM/2/CP 9  |
| Australia                   |                |
| Country Papers – Volume 10  | 11CCEM/2/CP 10 |
| Sierra Leone                |                |
| Solomon Islands             |                |
| Tonga                       |                |
| Country Papers – Unnumbered |                |
| The Bahamas                 |                |
| Belize                      |                |
| Lesotho                     |                |
| Maldives                    |                |

Lead Speech by The Hon. Fay Chung,  
Minister of Education and Culture, Zimbabwe  
Lead Speech by Hon. Comrade Deryck Bernard,  
Minister of Education, Guyana  
Statement by Prof. Colin N Power,  
Assistant Director-General, Unesco

### **Agenda Item 3: Higher Education Co-operation**

#### **3a Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS)**

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Agenda and Documentation  | 3a/A |
| Commonwealth Higher Education Support<br>Scheme: Working Paper by the Commonwealth Secretariat  | 3a/B |
| Progress Report by the Commonwealth<br>Secretariat on Preliminary Studies and Pilot Projects under CHESS  | 3a/C |
| Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme:<br>Strengthening Capacity for Sustainable Development (Report of an Expert Group,<br>June 1990)     |      |
| Lead Speech by Professor James Downey, Chairman,<br>Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme  |      |
| Supplementary Material  |      |
| Progress Through Co-operation: Sixth Report of the Commonwealth Standing Committee<br>on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation, 1989 |      |

#### **3b Student Mobility**

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Agenda and Documentation  | 3b/A |
| Commonwealth Student Mobility: A Working Paper by the<br>Commonwealth Secretariat   | 3b/B |
| Annex to the Student Mobility Issues Paper:<br>Statistical Update   | 3b/C |
| Progress Through Co-operation: Sixth Report of the Commonwealth Standing<br>Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation, 1989 |      |
| Lead Speech by Sir Roy Marshall, Chairman of the Commonwealth Standing<br>Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation         |      |



### **3c Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan**

Agenda 3c/A  
Report of the CSFP Working Party 3c/B

#### **Agenda Item 4: The Commonwealth of Learning**

Agenda and Documentation 4/A  
The Commonwealth of Learning: Report to Ministers of Education 1990 4/B  
The Commonwealth of Learning: Rotation of Board Membership 4/C  
The Commonwealth of Learning: Rotation of Board Membership 4/C  
(revised) (revised)  
Report of The Commonwealth of Learning Working Party 4/D

#### **Supplementary Material**

Towards a Commonwealth of Learning: A Proposal to Create the University  
of the Commonwealth for Co-operation in Distance Education (The Briggs Report)  
The Commonwealth of Learning: Institutional Arrangements for  
Commonwealth Co-operation in Distance Education (The Daniels Report)  
Memorandum of Understanding on The Commonwealth of Learning  
The Commonwealth of Learning Annual Report 1989  
The Commonwealth of Learning Compendium of Activities 1989-90

#### **Agenda Item 5 Adoption of Reports**

Reports on Agenda Item 2

Plenary Discussions on Improving the Quality of Basic Education 2/G

Committee Reports:

Committee A: Better Schools and Better Classrooms  
Committee B: Better Support and Services  
Committee C: Education Beyond Formal Schooling  
Committee D: Management and Resources

Reports on Agenda Item 3:

Report of Plenary Discussion on CHES 3a/D  
Report of Plenary Discussion on Student Mobility 3b/D  
Report of the Working Party on the Commonwealth 3c/B  
Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

Report on Agenda Item 4:

Report of the Working Party on The Commonwealth of Learning 4/D

#### **Agenda Item 6 Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme in Education**

Report of the Working Party on the Commonwealth Secretariat Work  
Programme in Education WP/D

#### **Conference Communiqué**

#### **Papers Submitted by Other Organisations**

Commonwealth Council for Education in the Commonwealth

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