

## REPORTS OF RECENT MEETINGS

### Medical-Legal Workshops

Paper prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat

Recommendations on a number of issues with both medical and legal implications were made by the Fifth Commonwealth Medical Conference in 1977. Among these were the training and use of paramedicals for community health care, commercial advertising inimical to health, the medical termination of pregnancy, and regulation of the use of medicinal drugs and control of their quality. Many member governments having subsequently expressed interest in participating in interdisciplinary discussions on these issues, two medical-legal workshops were held in 1979, in Barbados and in Malawi.

2. The object of these workshops was to assist those governments which might wish to review their relevant legislation and, where necessary, to establish appropriate arrangements for sustaining joint medical-legal dialogue and related action. The reports of both workshops were circulated to health and law ministries of Commonwealth governments.

3. The meeting of Commonwealth representatives in Geneva in May 1980, prior to the World Health Assembly, gave general endorsement to the main conclusions of the workshops and agreed that the reports should be given further consideration by the Sixth Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting in Arusha.

#### Commonwealth Secretariat action

4. Besides giving attention to the conclusions in general, Health Ministers may wish to endorse the proposal of the Commonwealth Secretariat that the areas in which it might provide its most effective support in relation to the workshop recommendations should include the following:

- (a) assistance to member governments which might wish to revise or enact legislation in relation to certain specific health problems;
- (b) promotion of the development of cooperation between governments and between law and health ministries on matters of medical-legal concern;
- (c) identification of ways in which other agencies, including non-governmental organisations, might be of assistance;
- (d) exchange of information between member governments on medical and legal action in the health field; and support for the development of medical and legal health discussion and action groups on a national and regional basis.