

Chapter 3

GROUP REPORT - NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAMMES

3.1 The Role of National Youth Programmes in Developing Countries

It was unanimously agreed that in developing countries National Youth Programmes should, in each case, constitute an integral part of the overall programme for national development. Further, it was similarly agreed that particularly in the African region of the Commonwealth a National Youth Programme could, with advantage, be used as a powerful agency for the implementation of development strategies for a wide range of specific objectives. It was, therefore, suggested that in these countries National Youth Programmes should be designed to relate to the totality of the national condition and character.

Given the magnitude of the general national problems of poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment, as well as the urgency of the widespread need for rural development demand, it was emphasised that the resolution of these conditions be placed prominently among the priorities as to objectives and functioning of National Youth Programmes; and it was asserted that for such programmes there are vital roles with regard to education, training, and performance - in respect particularly to improving the practice of agriculture, including the generation of a sound and functional infrastructure, the development of appropriate technology, and the realisation of genuine rural development.

3.2 Current Programmes

It was observed that existing programmes cater for only a small proportion of the youth population, and actually involve a significantly smaller number in active participation in developmental pursuits. In general the programmes are directed at the youth in the formal education system. This it was claimed is particularly true in the case of the voluntary sector of National Youth Programmes. Therefore, it was stressed that concerted effort should be made to cater for and involve the illiterate and un-schooled youth through such specific means as Young Farmers Clubs, Cooperatives and so on.

Thus it was emphasised that the scope and purpose of current National Youth Programmes should be expanded in order to function in the desired manner.

It is necessary, it was argued, to reappraise the voluntary sector to ensure that its activities are consistent with the objectives of the overall national development programme and effectively contribute to the achievement of the goals.

Emphasis was placed on the need for coordination, at all levels, of the several activities which come within the embrace of National Youth Programmes, particularly within the context of a significant expansion in scope and participation. Finally, attention was directed to the benefits, including personal development, which would accrue from such an expansion of the programmes. Specific mention was made of enhanced motivation, increased acquisition of skills, and the release of the great potential of man-power in such an intensification of the thrust of the national development effort.