

INTRODUCTION

One reason why most developing countries are willing to spend a large proportion of their annual budget on education is that their governments hope that educational expansion will lead to a greater supply of manpower for national development. Experience shows, however, that this expectation has not been fulfilled. In no field has disappointment been more acutely felt than in technical education.

Practical industrial training has exercised the minds of Commonwealth governments and the Commonwealth Secretariat for several years. Successful conferences of Commonwealth Ministers of Education have stressed the importance of practical training in industry for technicians, technologists, and engineers.

In recognition of the interest and continuing priority which member states attach to the training and placement of technicians, the Secretariat organized in 1976 a seminar on the theme of Technical Education and Industry in Hong Kong for Commonwealth countries in Asia and the Pacific. The purposes of that seminar were to improve communication between technician educators and industry, to raise the quality and quantity of training for technicians, and to improve co-operation among member countries of the Commonwealth.

The current seminar is the second to deal with the theme. It was organized, with funds provided by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, on the recommendation of the Accra conference of Ministers of Education following the success of the Hong Kong seminar. Its emphasis was once more on partnership between education and industry. It considered how more encouragement could be given to industry to train skilled personnel for its own and other requirements. It also considered and made recommendations on regional and Commonwealth co-operation.

It is hoped that the seminar will result in practical programmes and viable projects that will assist Commonwealth countries of Africa in making technical education more relevant to their needs. In particular, it is hoped that member governments will give serious consideration to those recommendations dealing with action at the national level, and that regional and pan-Commonwealth co-operation will flow from such national action.

The Commonwealth Secretariat wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for playing host, and the University for the facilities it placed at the disposal of the seminar and for having made participants so welcome at a difficult time. Special thanks are due to the Chairman, Dr. S.E. Chukwujekwu, who steered the sessions so ably, to the consultants and resource persons, to the chief liaison officer, co-secretary, rapporteurs, liaison officers and supporting staff, to the Director of the University Conference Centre and his staff, and to everyone else who contributed to the success of the seminar.

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