

## COMMONWEALTH CO-OPERATION IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION

One of the functions of the Commonwealth Secretariat is to encourage and promote co-operation among member countries in the field of education. The Education Division of the Secretariat carries out this function in two main ways: collecting and disseminating information; and organizing conferences, seminars, workshops and training courses.

It was pointed out that in performing its tasks, the Commonwealth Secretariat works closely with international agencies and with regional and national organizations, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort. In addition, the Secretariat tries to keep in touch with teachers' associations, particularly in their task of fostering educational development not only on a national basis but also among Commonwealth countries.

Attention was drawn to some recent Secretariat activities in technical education. It was noted that following the recommendations of the Seventh Commonwealth Education Conference of Ministers held in Accra in March 1977, the Secretariat convened a meeting at the Kenya Polytechnic in Nairobi in December 1977 to discuss the formation of a Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa. Copies of the report of that meeting (the Report of the Planning Meeting proposing a Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa), it was further noted, would be made available on request. Again, the Secretariat has followed up one other recommendation of the same Ministerial Conference, namely the setting up of a working group to explore the feasibility and the modus operandi of a Commonwealth Exchange Scheme for Industrial Training and Experience on a basis similar to that of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. The report of this working group is also available.

Other topics highlighted were the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation - its nature, terms of reference and operations, and the Secretariat's new initiatives aimed at teaching about the Commonwealth.

Following the lengthy and lively discussions that ensued, a number of recommendations were made. These included the following:

"The Secretariat is requested to review its system of disseminating information to ensure that it reaches individuals and all relevant institutions and organizations who might benefit from it.

"The Secretariat should consider publishing a journal of technical education for subscription by individuals and institutions in member countries. Such a journal should deal with the development of teaching techniques and educational experience gained in member countries.

"The Secretariat should consider establishing a Staff College or similar provision in Africa for the development of teachers and administrators in technical education institutions.

"Technical institutions should be encouraged to publish house journals for circulation in local colleges and industry, and externally.

"When the proposed Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa is formed, one of its initial activities should be the organization of an annual technical education week."