

ADDRESS BY MR. E.C. ANYAOKU  
COMMONWEALTH DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

It is my privilege as representative of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Shridath Ramphal, to respond to the words of welcome that you, Mr. Chairman, and the representative of the Federal Commissioner for Education of Nigeria have addressed to all of us who are here for this seminar. I am sure that I speak for all in expressing deep gratitude and appreciation for the excellent facilities that have been put at our disposal and for the warmth of the welcome that has been accorded to us since our arrival here.

If I may interject a personal note, Mr. Chairman, it is for some of us indeed a special delight to be back in the Ibadan campus and see so many signs of growth and development that have occurred over the years since we ourselves had the pleasurable experience of being part of its community. Perhaps the only regret is that we do not as of today have with us the company of the University's students. It is my strong hope that if not before, then perhaps not long after the end of this seminar, the temporary difficulties will be over, and the normal life of this campus will be fully restored.

Both the theme and the nature of the representation of this seminar illustrate two important aspects of the today's Commonwealth. Assembled here are representatives and observers from 12 African countries who wish to use the facility of the Commonwealth association in their search for ways of strengthening their national efforts in an area of great importance for sociological, economic and industrial development. Time there was, when the mention of the Commonwealth only too readily evoked a spectre of an essentially Anglo-centric association whose pursuits and interests were inadequately orientated to the up-to-date preoccupations of independent Africa. Today's Commonwealth, with its collective and independent Secretariat seeks to serve its 36 member nations in areas that matter not only to its members, but also the international community as a whole. Whether it is in respect of the now universally recognized tragedy of South Africa, or in respect of the current quest for a new international economic order, the Commonwealth has taken and continues to take collective measures that are supportive of the efforts of the OAU, the UN and those other bodies that articulate major international concerns. Among its member countries, the areas of continuing Commonwealth dialogue and practical collaborative programmes span politics, economics, science, education, law, medicine, youth, etc. Through the facilities of a multilateral Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, no less than 300 experts from different Commonwealth countries are now working in other Commonwealth countries at any given time.

But I must now turn in particular to the efforts of the Commonwealth Secretariat in the countries of Africa, as well as of Asia and the Pacific, in the field of education and manpower development. These efforts have been, and continue to be based on priorities identified by member countries themselves and implemented by the Commonwealth Secretariat in response to immediate needs.

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan under which donor Commonwealth countries make scholarship awards available to nationals of the Commonwealth through places tenable in their local universities is probably one of our best known programmes. Nigeria is a worthy participant in this scheme and awards a substantial number of scholarships every year in its universities to candidates from Britain, Canada, India and other African countries. Likewise, Nigerian students benefit from this scheme in universities of other Commonwealth countries.

Under the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation which I have already mentioned and as part of the education and training programme, Nigerian personnel in various fields such as education, agriculture, engineering, economics, etc., have attended attachment courses or enjoyed visiting awards in other Commonwealth countries while in return nationals of other countries have done likewise in Nigerian institutions or vocational establishments. It is a case of sharing resources and experience of which member countries of the Commonwealth can be justly proud.

In all the efforts of educational collaboration among Commonwealth countries the Secretariat has given emphasis to activities and projects which make a distinct contribution to the efforts being undertaken by member countries themselves. I need hardly say, therefore, that the Secretariat ministers to the needs of its member countries with the conviction, and happily the experience, that such projects do in fact advance the efforts of member states themselves.

For example, Universal Free Primary Education which was launched by Nigeria in 1976 was hailed as a significant educational development not only because of its magnitude but because of the educational policies which it represents. In this connection the issue of free primary education in member countries has been identified as an area to be studied by the Secretariat drawing on the examples of member states in Africa and other regions of the Commonwealth. Nigeria's experience is certainly a valuable component of that study which the Secretariat hopes to undertake before the next Conference of Ministers of Education in 1980.

The emphasis of many Commonwealth governments on technology development and on the place of technical education in their thrust for economic advance is too well known to be stressed. In respect of technical education the emphasis often arises not only from the need to introduce new machinery but also from the need to keep in operation machinery already expensively purchased. The facilities that exist here and the abundant evidence of the Nigerian Government's emphasis on technical development and training are a sufficient justification for holding the present seminar in this country. It is our hope that Nigeria's experience can be shared with other Commonwealth countries of the Africa region- experience that I trust will have sufficiently demonstrated the need for indigenous technology.

In the field on which we are particularly concentrating today, that is in the field of partnership between education and industry which is the theme of our seminar, it is clear that programmes of action are unlikely to succeed unless the partnership is real and convincing. The concept of partnership in technical training was articulated as long ago as the Ottawa Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in 1964. Since then it has been accepted that the development of manpower through technical and technician training is an effort jointly important to governments and to private industries. I am glad, therefore, to note that delegates and observers at this seminar include a strong selection of men from industry and the private sector as well as those from government.

Mr Chairman, I should not like to conclude my remarks without thanking all those who have helped to bring about this meeting. First I must thank the Federal Government of Nigeria for its co-operation in placing resources and facilities at our disposal for this Africa regional seminar. I believe I speak for all participants today when I say that although we are only just beginning our seminar, we have chosen an excellent host country for it. The industrial situation in Nigeria has produced well developed institutions which exemplify the partnership between technical education and industry - institutions such

as the Industrial Training Fund, vocational bodies as the Council of Registered Engineers in Nigeria. These, as well as the teaching institutions that have developed industrial liaison arrangements, clearly provide a good background and support for our seminar.

I should like most warmly to thank the University for its welcome and the facilities it has placed at the disposal of the Secretariat, and particularly for having made us so welcome at a time of considerable stress and problems. I should like to assure it that we will endeavour to benefit as fully as we can from our various countries from these facilities they have placed at our disposal.

Lastly, on occasions such as this the spotlight does not always reach those who carry the heaviest burden, and for this reason I should like to take the opportunity to thank our two consultants. I should like in particular to congratulate in public Mr Rex E.O. Akpofure who became the Director of the Education Division of the Secretariat ten months ago and serves as Director of this seminar. Those of you who have seen him at work or who know of his achievements in the Nigerian Federal Service will no doubt share with me my pleasure at his appointment. The Secretariat is grateful to the Federal Military Government for releasing him to serve the Commonwealth on occasions such as this.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, I want to wish all the participants in this seminar well and to express the hope that your deliberations in the next few days will result in concrete proposals for action; action that can and will contribute effectively to the capacity of the countries represented here for producing more of the technicians required for their development.

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#### VOTE OF THANKS

At the conclusion of the seminar, a vote of thanks was delivered by Mr. C.L. Abayo (Tanzania) on behalf of the participants. Mr. Abayo said that the seminar had made a valuable contribution to creating a deeper understanding of the partnership that should exist between technical education and industry. Participants would return home with a fuller understanding of the benefits of technical education, with a desire to see the recommendations implemented at national and regional levels, and with a feeling of gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretariat for organizing the seminar, the Nigerian Government for hosting it, and their own governments for allowing them to participate.