

## PREFACE

The Commonwealth Meeting of Specialists on Distance Teaching in Higher Education was called in January 1985 in Cambridge. The meeting had its origins in the work of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility which recommended that the Secretariat should expand its work in distance teaching; that recommendation was endorsed by Ministers of Education at their meeting in Cyprus in July 1984. The aim was

"to put together information about distance teaching in higher education within the Commonwealth as a guide for decision makers in universities and ministries of education, and to determine roles for Commonwealth action in:

helping the development of individual distance-teaching projects;  
co-operative developments and the use of software;  
regional initiatives;  
training".

We invited to the meeting, in their individual capacity, seventeen people from eleven Commonwealth countries and three international agencies. Through the presence of participants from the two Commonwealth international universities - of the South Pacific and of the West Indies - we were able to call on an even wider knowledge, especially of the educational problems of small states. We owe a major debt of gratitude to those who came to a Cambridge winter and gave a valuable week to help guide our policy. We have particular debts to five participants: to Dr Christodoulou of the Association of Commonwealth Universities and Professor Lalor of the University of the West Indies who chaired our sessions; and to Dr Dhanarajan of the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Mr Guiton of Murdoch University, and Mrs Seetulsingh of the Mauritius College of the Air who acted as rapporteurs for us. The names of participants are set out in Appendix 1. We are grateful, too, to the staff at Wolfson Court, Girton College, where the meeting was held, for their warm and friendly welcome

Our meeting focussed on co-operation and on the sharing of resources, and this focus is reflected in our report. And so, while the report is far from being a how-to-do it guide to distance education, we believe that it is a useful guide to the next steps in Commonwealth co-operation for distance education.