

# Report of the Committee of the Whole

## **Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC)**

1. The Committee noted that, within its programme framework and available resources, the Secretariat continues, through the CFTC, to deliver its programme of development assistance to a large number of countries and dependent territories.
2. It noted at the same time that the CFTC continues to experience a decline in its resources in real and nominal terms, and the consequent impact this has had on the amount of technical assistance provided. It supported the role of the CFTC in providing technical assistance in areas where it has a comparative advantage, especially with regard to the needs of small states. The Committee also urged that, by considering increasing contributions within each country's means, the CFTC should be strengthened to allow it to deliver consistently the high quality of assistance which has won the support and recognition of member governments.
3. The Committee noted with satisfaction the successful completion of the review of the 'C' Programmes in the Secretariat's Strategic Plan and that an internal Secretariat working group was overseeing the implementation of the agreed recommendations.
4. The Committee welcomed the launching of the Commonwealth Secretariat Volunteer Scheme (CSVS), designed to utilise the skills of serving and retired Commonwealth experts in various fields on an expenses-paid only basis, thus helping to stretch the Commonwealth's limited resources.

## **Review of Other Economic and Social Programmes**

5. The Committee welcomed the Report on the Review of the Secretariat's Economic and Social Programmes not covered by the 'C' Review, containing a

number of positive and useful recommendations for action by the Secretariat as well as by governments. It endorsed the approach in the Secretary-General's response in respect of the recommendations contained in the Report. It requested the Secretary-General to take early steps to implement the recommendations and report to the Steering Committee of Senior Officials (SCOSO).

## **Southern Africa**

6. The Committee noted the important contribution by the Commonwealth's programme of technical assistance to South Africa in consolidating that country's transition to a non-racial democracy. Consistent with the desire of the South African Government that this assistance should continue for the present, the Committee recommended an extension for a further two years from July 1996 of this programme of assistance.

7. The Committee also noted that Mozambique has continued to receive Commonwealth assistance, using residual funds from the Special Commonwealth Fund for Mozambique, and under the Mozambique-Australia Human Resources Development Programme (MAHRDP), managed by the Secretariat.

## **Debt**

8. The Committee drew the attention of Heads of Government to the discussion on bilateral and multilateral debt at the meetings of Commonwealth Finance Ministers in Malta in 1994 and in Jamaica in 1995. It recommended that Heads of Government endorse the conclusions reached by Finance Ministers in Jamaica. It agreed that the Commonwealth could make a significant contribution to the debate, both between debtor and creditor countries and within the international financial institutions, and requested the Secretariat to continue to provide technical support in this area.

## **Financial Flows**

9. The Committee expressed concern at the erosion of support in some countries for official development assistance and recommended that Heads of Government urge donors to use their best endeavours to secure substantial flows of funds and to improve the quality of their assistance. The Committee specifically recommended that Heads call for IDA-10 pledges to be honoured in full and for IDA-11 to take account of new claimants and an expanded development agenda.

## **Private Investment**

10. The Committee welcomed the endorsement by Commonwealth Finance Ministers of the establishment of the Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative (CPII) as a collaborative venture between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Development Corporation, which is to manage the project on a commercial basis. This will be a venture aimed at establishing a series of regional funds and other structures, starting with an investment company for Commonwealth Africa. The purpose of the Initiative will be to mobilise capital for long-term investments in expanding privatised or privatising companies and in small and medium sized private sector businesses. The Committee recommended that the Initiative be endorsed by Heads of Government and urged them to encourage interested investment agencies and institutions in Commonwealth countries to invest in the CPII. This would give confidence to private sector investors and help to attract co-investment from the major financial markets. It was recognised that the success of the initiative would depend on the mobilisation of a critical mass of investment capital.

11. The Committee expressed the hope that attention would also be paid to encouraging greater flows of foreign direct investment to an increasing number of Commonwealth countries which have not benefited from such flows so far. It asked the CFTC to provide more technical assistance to developing countries, with a view to enabling them to attract such flows. The Fund should play a bridge-building role between investors and recipients, and encourage monitoring and evaluation of the results of such investments.

## **Trade Policy**

12. The Committee welcomed the activities of the Secretariat in assessing the implications for Commonwealth countries of the Uruguay Round agreements and other changes in the international trading system, and in formulating policies to take advantage of the new trading opportunities thus presented. It encouraged the Secretariat to pursue this work further, paying particular attention to the concerns of small states and to the trading interests of the ACP countries more generally, particularly in the context of the Lomé Convention. It also recognised the importance of promoting private investment to enhance the capabilities of countries to benefit from the new opportunities opened up by the Round. In this context, the Ninth Ministerial Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), from 26 April to 11 May 1996, hosted by South Africa, also provides an opportunity for the Secretariat and Commonwealth members to make an input on trade and development issues.

## **Environment**

13. The Committee welcomed the important recommendations made by Commonwealth Environment Ministers for strengthening Commonwealth co-operation in several areas, in particular in the area of forestry. It also noted with satisfaction the momentum gained by the Iwokrama Rainforest Programme and commended its linkage to similar projects in other countries. It urged that Commonwealth governments extend full support to the Iwokrama Programme, particularly after the establishment of the International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development and a Donor Support Group. The Committee supported the Secretariat's on-going work in environment and sustainable development and, in that regard, urged it both to take account of regional initiatives and to continue to pay particular attention to the special concerns of small states, including support for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action on the sustainable development of small island developing states.

## **Poverty Alleviation**

14. The Committee noted that in many member countries of the Commonwealth poverty remained a seemingly intractable problem, with pressures to reduce public expenditure often bearing heavily on social priority programmes. In this context, it welcomed the initiative undertaken by the Secretariat to act as a catalyst and to help establish practical mechanisms which seek to mobilise the energies of people through programmes such as self-help schemes with non-governmental agencies, rural credit and collateral-free banking and small and medium-scale enterprises.

## **Human Resource Development**

15. The Committee reaffirmed the priority which the Commonwealth attached to human resource development. It noted the action taken to implement the recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on Human Resource Development, *Foundation for the Future*, and the five key strategies identified by the 12th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in November 1994. It urged member governments to pursue actively the implementation of these strategies, in consultation with the Secretariat.

16. The Committee commended the contribution made by the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility and Higher Education Co-operation, which had been disbanded after having completed its work.

17. The Committee welcomed the establishment of the Commonwealth Uni-

versities Study Abroad Consortium (CUSAC) as an alternative mechanism to encourage student flows to countries which have in the past largely been senders rather than recipients. It urged that scholarships and grants for short-term study abroad be provided by member governments to promote student mobility.

18. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the progress in awards under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) and the Protocol on this subject adopted by Education Ministers at Islamabad in November 1994. It recommended that Heads of Government reaffirm their commitment to the CSFP and to the achievement of the target of 2,000 awards by the year 2000, and urged all member countries to participate in the CSFP.

## **Health**

19. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to implementation of the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Committee also took stock of progress made in achieving the mid-decade goals of the Plan of Action of the 1990 Summit for Children. While commending the advances made, it expressed concern that performance had remained patchy. With the impending meeting of Commonwealth Health Ministers in Cape Town in December 1995 in mind, it urged increased political commitment to the achievement of the goals for the year 2000. The Committee also recommended the sharing of Commonwealth knowledge and expertise and enhanced regional co-operation in addressing child health and recognised the role that can be played by the institution of the family. The Committee underscored the desirability of achieving full adult literacy and reduction in maternal mortality as soon as possible.

20. The Committee agreed on the importance of strong support by all governments and co-sponsoring organisations for the new Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS. The Committee also drew the attention of Heads of Government to the review conducted by Health Ministers of the progress in the development of national, multisectoral AIDS programmes to combat the alarming spread of the pandemic. It recommended that Heads of Government request Health Ministers to continue to monitor such programmes and endorsed the need for accurate data collection; for the establishment of country priorities for prevention and treatment; for the according of high priority to blood safety; and for the promotion of local research and development for treatment and management of HIV/AIDS. As in the Health Department's work generally, the Committee considered that it should focus on playing a catalytic and brokerage role with other more specialised agencies.

## **Commonwealth Studies**

21. The Committee welcomed the initiative by the Commonwealth Secretary-General to establish a Commission on Commonwealth Studies to examine the state of Commonwealth studies in higher education in the Commonwealth and to identify possible practical ways of strengthening them. It took note of the nine recommendations submitted to the Secretary-General by the Commission in its Interim Report and recommended that Heads of Government endorse wider knowledge of the Commonwealth as a key strategy for furthering the Commonwealth's objectives, and that they encourage their authorities responsible for higher education funding and research to promote Commonwealth studies across a broad range of topics as suggested in the Commission's Interim Report.

## **Gender and Development**

22. The Committee welcomed the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, as a set of strategic objectives, actions and priority areas for Commonwealth co-operation. The Plan focuses on strengthening institutional capacities and national women's machineries, establishing gender management systems, mainstreaming gender issues into all policies, ensuring more equitable sharing of resources, promoting equity of outcomes and monitoring the integration of gender issues into all policies. The Committee noted the wide resonance its presentation to the Fourth World Conference on Women had achieved. It drew the attention of Heads of Government to the recommendation by Commonwealth Ministers of Women's Affairs that the Plan of Action be endorsed at the highest level. It requested member governments and the Secretary-General to make every effort to implement the Plan. It urged all member governments to develop national policies on women and to share information on the development of these policies and mechanisms put in place by member governments.

## **Youth Affairs**

23. The Committee drew the attention of Heads of Government to the message from Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Youth Affairs addressed to them. It noted the three inter-related strategic directions to strengthen the work of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) identified by the CYP and endorsed by Commonwealth Youth Ministers. It urged that all Commonwealth governments make a special commitment to youth development, with special emphasis on National Youth Policies as instruments of change, and the strengthening of Ministries and other agencies responsible for youth. It also welcomed the launching of the Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative (CYCI).

## **Commonwealth Sport**

24. The Committee took note of the Report of the CHOGM Committee on Co-operation through Sport. It endorsed the view expressed in the Report that sport offered an exceptionally suitable means of enabling young people to develop their full potential. Accordingly, the Committee urged developing and developed countries to encourage investment in sport and physical education programmes, including the exchange of technical assistance, and to integrate sport into their planning and policy implementation in sectors such as youth, health, education and the environment, in line with the recommendation of Youth Ministers earlier this year. The Committee recognised the important role of the Commonwealth Games Federation in overseeing the Games and encouraged member countries to provide the Federation with the necessary resources to sustain its core responsibilities. It recommended that member governments and the Secretariat should continue to maintain their supportive activities.

25. The Committee acknowledged the contribution made by the CHOGM Committee on Co-operation through Sport and recommended to Heads of Government that its mandate be extended for a further four-year term. The Committee requested the CHOGM Committee on Co-operation through Sport to undertake a review of its operations to ensure that it remains relevant to members' needs during the period of its extended mandate. Such a review should examine the value of rotating the chairing role to a country which had been awarded the Commonwealth Games.

## **Fundamental Values**

26. The Committee expressed its support for the multi-faceted nature of the Secretariat's activities in the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, through the provision of constitutional, electoral and legal assistance, the holding of judicial colloquia, administrative law and electoral management workshops, and courses in legislative drafting. It encouraged the Secretariat to intensify its efforts in the area of consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights so that the democratic ethic could take firmer root in all member countries.

## **Public Service Reform**

27. The Committee endorsed the Commonwealth initiative proposed by the Secretary-General on Public Service Reform: 'Towards a New Public Administration', aimed at assisting member countries in their efforts to strengthen the performance of their public services. It noted that the initiative would focus on

the design of overall public service reform strategies, the implementation of the specific components of reform programmes including institutional reforms, and the development of national capacities to sustain reform. It further noted the Secretariat's determination to implement the initiative in collaboration with the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and the Commonwealth Network on Information Technology (COMNET-IT). It also welcomed the establishment of the CLGF as an important Commonwealth institution for strengthening action among Commonwealth member states on local government structures.

### **Drug Trafficking**

28. The Committee noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of Commonwealth member countries which have become states party to the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the action taken by the Secretariat to enhance national capacity.

### **Money Laundering**

29. The Committee noted that, in accordance with the mandate from Heads of Government at Cyprus, the question of combating money laundering had been addressed by both Law Ministers and Finance Ministers.

30. The Committee welcomed the measures agreed by Law Ministers, including the determination to penalise the laundering of the proceeds of all serious crimes, making the offence extraditable and its proceeds liable to confiscation, facilitating disclosure of relevant information by financial institutions and promoting international co-operation in this important field.

31. The Committee also welcomed the consideration the subjects had received from Finance Ministers and drew the attention of Heads of Government to the Special Report submitted by them. It recommended that Heads of Government endorse the approach outlined by the Ministers, including action in the financial sector to create and strengthen effective mechanisms for supervision, improve public awareness, instill a broadly based "compliance culture", and promote international co-operation and mutual assistance in all areas relating to money laundering. It also expressed the conviction that a common legislative approach to the problem would facilitate international co-operation and invited member states to draw benefit from the Draft Model Law for the Prohibition of Money Laundering developed by the Secretariat. The Committee considered that successful Commonwealth action would require a strong political commitment from Heads of Government and close co-operation between finance and

law ministries. Close collaboration would also be needed with other bodies working in this area such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). It noted that there was a need for training to develop the skills necessary to implement the legal infrastructure and supervise and monitor the financial sector.

### **Commercial Crime**

32. The Committee noted the consideration given to, and the progress made in, this issue by Law Ministers, including their Statement on Mutual Assistance between Business Regulatory Agencies. It also acknowledged the various actions taken by the Secretariat in this context and urged it to intensify its efforts to help Commonwealth countries counter the rapid growth of commercial crimes.

### **International Criminal Court**

33. The Committee welcomed the examination being undertaken by the United Nations on the possibility of establishing an international criminal court. It recommended that Law Ministers keep further developments under review.

### **Science and Technology**

34. The Committee reaffirmed the importance the Commonwealth attached to scientific and technological co-operation and drew the attention of Heads of Government to the message addressed to them by the Commonwealth Science Council. It recommended that governments accord due priority to science and technology in the formulation of national policy.

35. It recognised the important catalytic role of the Commonwealth Science Council and urged that it be provided the necessary resources, and that payment of arrears be made to enable it to carry out its task. It also encouraged governments to consider making special pledges to sustain the Council's flagship programmes of energy, water resources, and biodiversity and genetic resources. It noted that the issue of reforming the financial basis of the Commonwealth Science Council and moving to project-related contributions was under consideration.

### **Commonwealth Foundation**

36. The Committee commended the Report of the Commonwealth Foundation to Heads of Government, together with the Report of the Second NGO Forum. It expressed appreciation for the Foundation's contribution towards promoting people-to-people co-operation in the Commonwealth. It endorsed those

proposals made at the Second NGO Forum which serve to increase co-operation between governments, donors and non-governmental organisations in the fight against poverty. It strongly commended the *Guidelines for Good Policy and Practice* as an important contribution towards fostering closer co-operation with NGOs in the field of socio-economic development.

37. The Committee acknowledged the difficult resource position faced by the Foundation and urged members to take all possible action, including prompt payment of arrears, to overcome this situation. The Committee encouraged the Foundation to continue its valuable work, especially with development-oriented NGOs throughout the Commonwealth, to draw up medium and long-term plans, particularly in the light of recommendations made at the Second NGO Forum, and requested it to submit these, in accordance with established budgetary procedures, to the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1997.

### **Commonwealth of Learning**

38. The Committee commended the Report of the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to Heads of Government. It expressed appreciation for the impressive progress made by COL since its establishment in 1988 and for the advances made in implementing the recommendations of the 1993 Review Committee and the two further studies of COL's operations aimed at improving operational efficiency and the streamlining of management and governance. The Committee noted the endorsement given by member governments to the changes proposed to the Memorandum of Understanding, especially in respect of Board membership.

39. The Committee acknowledged that the Commonwealth had, through COL, been able to play a leading role in furthering the application of distance education and open learning to meet the human resource development needs of its member countries. This will enable COL to help fulfil the Commonwealth commitment of "education for all" and ensure, in particular, that this will extend education to girls, the disabled and marginalised groups through the application of distance education technologies.

40. The Committee expressed concern that despite COL's impressive achievements and the increasing demands for its services, the organisation faced a financial crisis which had necessitated a narrowing of the scope of its activities. It urged member governments to reaffirm their support strongly and to review their financial commitment to COL. It welcomed the proposal that formal pledging of resources to COL, including the making of new commitments by member governments in a position to do so, should in future be made for three-year

periods at meetings of Commonwealth Education Ministers. Governments were also urged to pledge resources at a sufficient level to ensure a core budget of not less than C\$5 million per year. Until the next meeting of Education Ministers, the Committee urged new and renewed pledges to cover COL's short-term budgetary shortfalls.

### **Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management**

41. The Committee noted the achievements of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Technology Management (CCGTM) and its Private Sector Partnership (PSP) in enhancing technology transfer in member countries during the period of their operations, 1989-1995. It noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM) Ltd, which will continue the CCGTM/PSP's work, as a unique joint venture between Commonwealth governments, private sector companies and networkers. It reaffirmed the high priority attached by the Commonwealth to promoting greater efficiency in technology management, enhancing the transfer of technology for the creation of wealth in developing countries and enlarging public-private sector co-operation. The Committee also urged more member governments to contribute to this venture and those already contributing to maintain and, where possible, to increase contributions to this innovative venture and to ensure the pan-Commonwealth character of the organisation. The Committee requested the Secretary-General to ensure that Heads of Government receive regular reports on CPTM's work with a view to encouraging support for its activities.

### **Commonwealth Green Pennant Awards**

42. The Committee commended Zambia for its successful production of the Model for Green Pennant Awards of Commonwealth expeditions (Comex), and decided to bring the Green Pennant Awards to the attention of Commonwealth Heads of Government for endorsement.

### **Contributions to Commonwealth Budgets**

43. The Committee noted with concern that, notwithstanding the efforts by the Secretariat towards achieving the settlement of arrears of contributions to its budget, a few countries continue to be in persistent arrears. It also noted that some of the other funds, viz. the CFTC and CSC, were experiencing similar difficulties, with operations and programme delivery threatened by the shortage of liquidity. It was convinced that the problem of arrears of contributions on the part of some countries now warranted firm remedial measures.

44. Accordingly, recalling the decision taken by it in Cyprus and in the light of the recommendations made by Senior Officials at their Islamabad meeting, the Committee agreed to seek endorsement by Heads of Government of the following measures:

- Those countries which failed to meet their obligations and were two or more years in arrears to the Commonwealth Secretariat assessed budget, and had not agreed arrangements to pay such arrears in instalments, might not expect to be considered for further technical assistance;
- when a country continued to remain in arrears in its contribution to the Secretariat's assessed budget for six years or more, it would be deemed to have opted to become a special member;
- members in arrears in respect of the assessed budget, but which had paid their contributions to the CFTC, would have the option of becoming special members; while this would preclude their attending Heads of Government Meetings, they would still have access to technical assistance; and
- the Secretary-General would, in each case, undertake prior consultations with the governments concerned in order to confirm that the special measures outlined above would be applied.

The measures would take effect from July 1996.

45. The Committee recommended that Heads of Government remit to the Finance Committee the question of a new scale of contributions for adoption.