

## Capacity-Building

Commonwealth developing countries are in a period of transition. They are experiencing rapid economic, social and political change and need to strengthen their ability to reorient their economies and implement policy changes in pursuit of sustainable economic development. The Secretariat helps them do this in two ways: by building up local skills through training, and by providing expertise, usually from other developing countries, in key positions.

In this way it concentrates on capacity-building, working closely with other multilateral and bilateral agencies to ensure that programmes meet particular country and institutional needs. The programmes are funded by the CFTC.

### Training to Enhance Skills

The Secretariat's training programmes are designed to identify and help meet human resource development needs in developing countries, assist institutions in developing local and regional capacity to offer specialised training programmes, and provide opportunities for upgrading technical and vocational skills. Since 1995, more than 9,000 people have taken part in CFTC-funded training programmes with the assistance of some 350 institutions, many in developing countries. These are described more fully elsewhere in the Report (*see page 64*).



*Agricultural economist Anna Locke inspects a sugar plantation in Mozambique*

### Providing Expert Skills

A major problem for many developing countries trying to reorient their economies and undertaking developmental tasks is a lack, in certain areas, of key skills and expertise. With funding from the CFTC, the Secretariat assigns advisers and operational experts, at the request of governments, to fill these gaps. In the two years since 1995, it has placed more than 650 short- and long-term experts in essential positions in

some 46 member countries, six dependent territories and several regional organisations where qualified nationals are not available.

These experts, many of whom are from other developing countries, use their skills to strengthen sectoral ministries, institutions and agencies. By working alongside local staff and providing on-the-job training as appropriate, they are also able to transfer their skills to national officials so that in the long run countries become more self-reliant and the numbers of skilled people available in government, and elsewhere, are enhanced. This is especially important in small states, where local capacity within government structures needs strengthening (see page 85). Similar support is provided to regional and sub-regional organisations with substantial Commonwealth membership.

## The Services Sector

Experts are sent to a variety of sectors which are described in other chapters throughout this Report. Particular attention, however, is paid to the services sector – to financial services, insurance, financial institutions, transport and tourism – for the improvement of efficiency and development of supporting infrastructure and institutions. In the past two years, for example, experts have assisted governments in the British Virgin Islands, Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Seychelles for tourism; in Ghana, Samoa, Uganda and Vanuatu for banking; in Belize and St Lucia for insurance; and in Ghana, Swaziland and Tanzania for financial institutions and co-operatives. Small states, especially, have benefited from expert assistance in tourism and in other sectors.

The CARICOM Secretariat and its member states benefited from a long-term adviser on the development of the services sector and a short-term analyst who assisted with the identification and promotion of areas with economic potential. Both have also assisted with the design and implementation of data collection on the services sector in the Caribbean.

Experts on co-operatives were provided to the Ghana Co-operative Bank to implement a restructuring plan, to Swaziland to advise on the feasibility of setting up housing finance co-operatives, and to Tanzania to set up a new department to provide corporate advisory services. Banking experts were sent to carry out an in-depth study of the restructuring requirements of the Development Bank of Uganda and its client companies, a development banking and credit adviser was sent to Vanuatu, and an adviser assisted with the development of legislation for the Samoa Offshore Centre. Insurance advisers went to Belize and the

*(left) Accountant Evelyn Young was sent as a Commonwealth expert to St Lucia as bursar of a college*

*(right) Commonwealth expert Morenike Babington-Ashaye established an Institute of Finance Management in Tanzania to improve the skills of accountants*



Eastern Caribbean Central Bank in St Lucia to strengthen and build the institutional capacity of the insurance sector, and an actuarial adviser was sent to Kenya to review its existing system for the regulation of the insurance industry and recommend improvements.

Efficient transport systems and public utilities such as telecommunications, water and energy, improved medical facilities and better health and social welfare systems, rational and sound planning, monitoring and development of physical assets and strengthening institutional capacity are basic to economic and social growth. Experts who serve in these areas include those in physical planning in The Gambia, Guyana and St Lucia; in health sector reform in Mauritius and St Lucia; in social planning and welfare in Belize and the British Virgin Islands; and in the monitoring of engineering projects including water, sewerage, roads and bridges in Jamaica.

In Mauritius, the CFTC sent a health economist and an expert in public health policy reform to assist the Government with the preparation of a new health policy and with the writing, editing and publication of an action plan for reform. It also placed a Chief Medical Officer in St Kitts and Nevis to assist the Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs in developing a functional and cost-effective health care system. In Papua New Guinea, a marine (legal) expert advised and assisted the Department of Transport and Maritime Resources by revising and drafting shipping legislation. A social planner assisted Belize in the establishment and operation of a Social Planning Unit within the Ministry of Social Development, and in the British Virgin Islands a labour administration consultant addressed social welfare needs through strengthening the labour administration system.

In Guyana, an airports electrical engineering expert has provided training and advice on preventive maintenance for electrical equipment, and an airworthiness expert has assisted with the regulation and administration of civil aviation. Tuvalu received the services of a civil aviation adviser in airport development and civil aviation policy; an expert was placed in the Gambian Civil Aviation Authority as Director of Flight Operations and Safety; and a management and financial adviser was provided to the OECS Civil Aviation Directorate in Antigua and Barbuda.

Civil, highway and senior project engineers and consultants on road development were provided to the governments of Maldives, Mauritius, Jamaica, Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago to assist in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of roads, bridges and construction projects.

#### COMMONWEALTH VOLUNTEERS

The Commonwealth Service Abroad Programme, launched in 1995, is another means by which the Secretariat meets the needs of member governments for short-term assistance. Volunteer experts from Commonwealth countries are assigned to technical assistance projects on a no-fee basis, with only travel expenses and a daily living allowance paid. Since the Programme's inception, volunteers have served in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific in fields such as law, diplomatic training, road transport planning and the garment industry.



*Volunteer Bruce Rogerson was sent to Samoa to help improve the repair facilities for machines*