

Administration

Since the Secretariat was restructured in mid-1993, it has delivered expanded and more sharply focused programmes and services to member governments in accordance with the principles set out in the 1991 Harare Commonwealth Declaration and the priority concerns which governments have identified. Administration support is provided especially in the areas of personnel management, financial management, accommodation, and conference, printing, information technology and library services.

Staff

The total Secretariat staff strength by mid-1997 was 348, reflecting a continued reduction since mid-1993 when the number of positions was reduced from 431 to 360. The Secretariat has also continued to recruit staff from as wide a Commonwealth geographical base as possible. Whereas in 1995 staff came from 33 countries, by early 1997 that spread had increased to 37 countries. In late 1995, at the request of governments, a study was commissioned to review the grading of posts and establish the competitiveness of remuneration packages. The exercise, undertaken with the help of consultants, ended in early 1997. Governments have approved the consultants' recommended changes in grading and pay levels as well as in staff performance appraisal processes. These changes are being implemented with an expectation that staff performance will be enhanced and higher levels of productivity achieved.

Measures to enhance staff productivity include greater use of computers in the Secretariat. Internal and external communication by electronic mail has been introduced. The development and implementation of information technology is being overseen by an Information Technology Steering Group chaired by a Deputy Secretary-General.

Activities aimed at increasing the skill levels of staff were undertaken through tailored-made seminars and workshops organised in-house as well as by having staff attend short external training programmes. An internal Staff Development Advisory Committee gives guidance on training priorities and implementation.

A list of Secretariat senior staff is given at Appendix V.

Finance

The problems which were encountered when the Financial Management Information System (FMIS) was initially installed and implemented have now been resolved and the system is widely used by Secretariat staff. The FMIS generally meets the current financial and management accounting and reporting needs of the Secretariat. A Project Activity Monitoring and Management system (PAMM) is being continuously developed. The current operation of FMIS and PAMM facilitates the

preparation of financial and management reports, which enables more effective financial monitoring and control.

The Secretariat's Assessed Budget and budgets for other funds are at Appendix VI, with programme budget allocations for 1995/96 and 1996/97.

Facilities and Support Services

In 1996, new arrangements were made for the Secretariat's printing, library and archives, and sale publications services, which enabled the Secretariat to withdraw from the office building at 10 Carlton House Terrace in London SW1. The Secretariat's offices are now in two main locations, Marlborough House and Quadrant House, both in Pall Mall, London, though one division, the Economic and Legal Advisory Services Division, and the Secretariat's archival storage continue to be housed elsewhere. During the period under review, member countries agreed on a Policy for Shared Commonwealth Records which allowed for documents to be released to the public after 30 years, subject to the approval of Commonwealth governments. Records for 1965 and 1966 released in early 1997 included the 1965/66 papers of the first Secretary-General, Arnold Smith, and this practice will be followed yearly.