

INDUSTRIAL KEY TO GROWTH

One of the factors behind the recent remarkable economic successes of Commonwealth countries such as Malaysia and Singapore has been the growth of their industrial and manufacturing sectors. This has brought with it new technological sophistication and higher living standards which have, in turn, further fuelled economic growth.

Spurred by these successful examples, the governments of other member countries are asking for more help to develop their industrial sectors. In recent years, the nature of the technical assistance required has also changed because governments now rely on the private sector to lead the way in industrial development.

Whereas previously, much of the Secretariat's industrial assistance was aimed at filling gaps in expertise in parastatal enterprises, countries now increasingly require assistance in designing and implementing the policies, institutions and infra-

structure which will promote the development of strong private sectors and market-based economies. In addition, the smaller countries of the Commonwealth seek help to develop their small-scale industrial sectors as a means of diversifying their economies, earning foreign exchange from the export of manufactured products, increasing employment opportunities, particularly among women and youth, and developing entrepreneurial and managerial skills.

In all industrial development activities, the Secretariat takes special care to address the needs of women entrepreneurs and to build in awareness of environmental concerns.

In 1993/94, a major review of the Secretariat's industrial assistance programme resulted in the adoption of a three-pronged strategy: to offer assistance in industrial development in areas where the Commonwealth had a comparative advantage; to help member countries acquire the capability to



Getting industry moving in Africa



With the growth of the plastics industry, concern is now focused on recycling and waste management

develop and sustain their own industrial programmes; and to create an environment which encouraged market-driven industrial development.

Accordingly, projects will include the development of the small- and medium-sized business sector and informal enterprise as well as of entrepreneurship, institutional development, and the development of industrial policy and appropriate infrastructure for sustainable industrial growth.

Recent examples of projects being developed or planned within the new programme focus include assistance for the development of small-scale food processing enterprises in Barbados, Belize, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea; entrepreneurship development workshops and small enterprise assistance in St Vincent and the Grenadines and in Vanuatu and a number of other small Pacific island states; strengthening the national Standards Bureaux in Malta and Mauritius and developing an Institute of Foundry Technology for the Caribbean; designing low-cost housing schemes in Namibia and Nigeria; assisting with setting up distillery effluent treatment facilities in Jamaica; designing and engineering a slipway for river barges in Guyana; developing an environmental

action plan for the quarrying industry in St Lucia; and developing a programme for small-scale industries in Namibia.

In the Pacific, assistance to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa has focused on improving entrepreneurship, local industrial consultancy capabilities and business management. Assistance was also provided to Brunei Darussalam and Maldives in developing a policy framework for entrepreneurship development. The need for the industrial exploitation of natural resources to promote small enterprises has also prompted assistance to Brunei Darussalam towards developing commercial possibilities for medicinal plants.

In the plastics sector, the Secretariat helped member countries look at ways of putting plastics waste to good use through recycling, which provides employment, is profitable, adds to a country's industrial base, reduces waste going to landfills and cuts pollution. A Commonwealth Plastics Network was established in 1991 through which information, such as choice of appropriate technologies, locating training institutions and cleaner production techniques, was circulated. This evolved in 1995 into a Global Plastics Network.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, the Secretariat assisted in the development of the pharmaceutical industry in Uganda, a ceramics project to produce tableware in Swaziland and a project for the recycling of plastics waste in Kenya. In Tanzania, it helped in the reactivation of a mini-sugar factory and in Namibia, the Ministry of Industry was assisted in the preparation of an action plan for the development of the small-scale and informal sector industries.

Regional Industrial Co-operation

Close collaboration has continued between the Secretariat and regional organisations. In 1993, the Secretariat completed a major study of the pharmaceutical industry in the Caricom region which addressed the specific problems and constraints of individual pharmaceutical enterprises,



*Encouragement for the exotic flower
and medicinal plant industries*

and the policy and institutional aspects at national and regional levels.

The Secretariat also collaborated with the University of the West Indies (UWI) in 1993/94 in the preparation of a study, *Selected Critical Issues Facing the Caribbean in Regional and International Economic Relations*. The industrial sector had been identified as one of the sectors vital to the region's development and the Secretariat's contribution focused on the current state of the region's industrial sector, what it would need to improve and industries and products where international competitive advantage could be developed.

Assistance was extended to SADC in the preparation of a strategic plan for the development of gypsum-based industries in the sub-region. Assistance was also provided for the development of a computerised Information Centre for the SADC Industry and Trade Co-ordination Division (SITC).

Private Sector Business Development

A healthy private sector is important if small- and

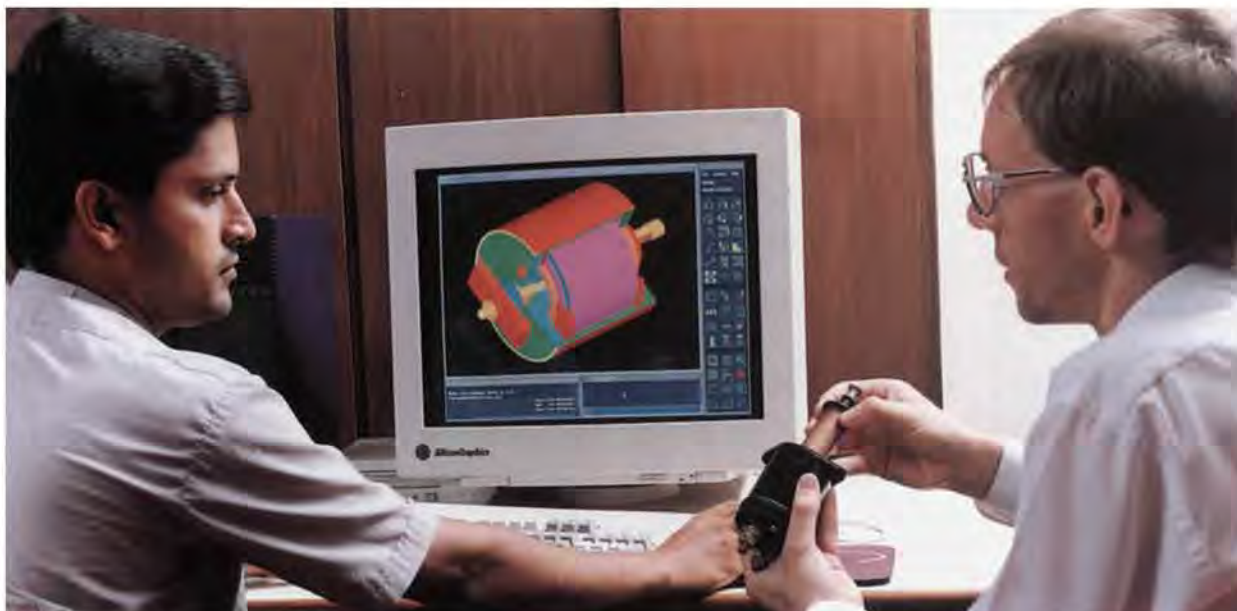
medium-sized enterprises are to survive and flourish. One of the ways the Secretariat is promoting the development of the private sector is through a Commonwealth Business Network. This network, launched in 1993, aims at strengthening the role of private business organisations throughout the Commonwealth in promoting international flows of trade, investment and technology and the development of the small-business sector.

Women are increasingly participating in small-scale industries in developing countries and special attention is given to assisting them with technical support. The Secretariat has assisted, or is planning assistance to, women entrepreneurs in a range of industries, particularly food processing, clothing, costume jewellery and handicrafts. It has also helped women entrepreneurs export their products.

Parastatals and Privatisation

As a result of structural adjustment programmes, member countries have continued to require in-depth analysis and auditing work for preparing state-owned enterprises for privatisation. In some cases, the emphasis has been on the promotion of resource mobilisation for industrial investment. In other cases, where managerial skills have been weak, efforts have been made to develop and prepare action plans for rehabilitation and 'turn-around' of state enterprises.

The Secretariat assisted the newly established Ministry of State Enterprises and Industries in Sierra Leone to examine the performance of some state enterprises and to reshape their organisational structures to facilitate their rehabilitation and better management. A loss-making parastatal/state enterprise distillery received advice from a CFTC-funded technical adviser for more than two years. Through the expert's efforts, the performances of other state enterprises were monitored more closely and effectively. Assistance in technical, and financial audit restructuring has also been given to enterprises in the Tanzanian and Zambian privatisation programmes and to the Jamaican Railway Corporation.



Commonwealth expert (right) explains solid modelling techniques to a draughtsman in a CAD/CAM centre set up with CFTC assistance in Madras, India, for a major automotive parts manufacturer

Renewable Natural Resources

The Secretariat offers a modest consultancy and technical assistance to governments in rural, agricultural and forestry development, land use management, livestock and fisheries. Priority is given to the renewable resources of forests and fisheries, where the involvement of women is especially encouraged.

Experts funded by the CFTC have been sent to countries requiring assistance in diversifying their agriculture, in livestock development and in introducing new technologies in rural development activities. The Secretariat has also acted as a broker between member governments and other donor organisations in obtaining development funding, as it did in Zimbabwe where it helped the Government negotiate finance to develop its small-scale dairy sector.

Together with non-governmental partners, the Secretariat has published two books which set out the scientific and social aspects of problems in the management and sustainable use of communal rangeland in Africa. In the Caribbean, a

study was made, with the support of Britain's ODA, of soil conservation and small-scale farming in the face of the continued loss of agricultural land on steep slopes by erosion.

The Secretariat has embarked on a programme proposed by the Government of Canada and part-funded by CIDA to review development assistance in the fisheries sector in a number of countries throughout the Commonwealth. The objectives are to review the impact, effectiveness and limitations of international development assistance in the fisheries sector and to recommend ways in which any shortcomings may be overcome.

Working with British scientists, the Secretariat has arranged a programme of training in Brunei Darussalam for government scientists responsible for the control of pests which damage local fruit crops. A scientific team visited Brunei, set in motion a trapping and identification programme and is providing technical back-up for the control measures.

The Secretariat works closely with regional organisations, such as SADC, in agriculture and fisheries matters and also supports training courses in managing rural credit and other aspects of rural development.