

## DEVELOPING PEOPLE

People are the Commonwealth's greatest asset and developing their skills and improving their welfare is crucial for economic growth and sustainable development. In the past two years, Commonwealth strategy in the area of human resource development has centred on the report, *Foundation for the Future*, which was prepared for the Cyprus CHOGM by a Commonwealth Working Group in 1993.

The report recommended five key priority areas for Commonwealth action: professionally managed government, the advancement of women and girls, innovative approaches to the mobilisation of resources, partnerships between government, NGOs and the private sector, and development of science and technology.

Heads of Government commended the report at CHOGM and the Prime Minister of Jamaica proposed a special initiative embracing the interrelated areas of education, training, research, the professions and youth affairs to ensure that the human resource development capabilities of institutions in member countries could be better mobilised.

Since then, the Secretariat has set up an inter-departmental task force to take the report's proposals further. It also called on the Development Administration Group of the University of Birmingham in Britain to help it distil the key principles from the report into an implementation plan based in part on the Jamaican proposal and taking into account institutional, structural and socio-economic factors which have a bearing on the success of national human resource development programmes.

A workshop in Birmingham in November 1994 reviewed the proposals for the implementation plan which drew in major Commonwealth stakeholders from developed and developing countries and was guided by principles of partnership, participation and capacity-building. The workshop recommended that key Commonwealth agencies,

especially regional and international training institutions, should be used in the implementation process, and outlined an implementation and dissemination model which included electronic networking.

A questionnaire and copies of *Foundation for the Future* were sent to 54 institutions in different Commonwealth countries seeking information on the state of human resource development in member countries. Analysis of the findings will assist the Secretariat to plan its activities in this area more effectively. The report was also distributed to Commonwealth ministries of education and training, labour and employment, finance and economic planning and human resource development with a request for feedback on its suggestions for ways in which the support of Commonwealth agencies and funds could be mobilised to implement its conclusions.

At their meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan, in November 1994, Commonwealth Ministers of Education endorsed the five key strategies for human resource development and called on the Secretariat to help member countries, on request, by organising, for example, regional workshops for promoting the practical application of the recommendations of the report.

The first major activity in this area was the high-level workshop for policy-makers selected from 12 Commonwealth countries held in Malaysia in July 1995. In the holistic spirit of *Foundation for the Future*, the workshop examined the application of the key strategy of professionally managed government to all the strategic targets for human resource development. It identified the need to develop and refine appropriate, practical tools to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of professionally managed government and to provide training to develop key skills.

Areas identified for action during the workshop

included the development of case studies to illustrate successes and constraints in human resource development; training of senior officials in intersectoral negotiations and management of donor agencies; development of professionalism in the government machinery; training in how to establish and evaluate quality indicators; and networking with member countries for viable interventions in human resource development strategies.

As a follow-up to the workshop in Malaysia, an expert group will meet in Hertford, Britain, in October 1995 to refine and finalise the draft report

of the workshop. The final report, which will lay emphasis on professionally managed government in relation to the key programme areas, will be refined and circulated to all member countries and will be followed by the production of resource materials. It is envisaged that training programmes and other effective interventions in the area of human resource development will follow in collaboration with member states.

The work of the Secretariat in the various areas of human resource development is described in previous as well as succeeding chapters of this Report.



## Enhancing Skills

The Secretariat helps governments invest in people by enhancing specialised skills in areas of high priority. It does so through an integrated package of technical assistance and through institutional capacity-building, both funded by the CFTC. Nearly a third of the CFTC's budget is spent on developing human resources.

Technical assistance is principally provided through advisory services, assessment of training needs, policy seminars and workshops, a mix of specialised in-country training and training abroad, and customised study visits.

In the two years since mid-1993, the Secretariat has granted more than 4,000 training awards for short- and long-term training to middle- and top-level managers and officials from the public, private and NGO sectors to study at over 200 institutions, many in developing countries. Sixty-three per cent of training takes place in less developed countries.

These trainees have included new entrants to the job market as well as technical personnel in areas such as management and public administration, civil service reform, good governance and democratic practices, banking and finance, project management, integrated rural development, human resource planning and development, entrepreneurship and small business development and new technologies encompassing information technology.

Technical and vocational training is provided under the Commonwealth Industrial Training and Experience Programme (CITEP), which in the past two years has trained more than 150 engineers and technologists in fields such as maintenance engineering, computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD/CAM), and machine tool design, and also provided for study visits.

At the same time, the Secretariat seeks to strength-

en universities and other institutions so that they can become centres of excellence and upgrade the tuition they offer by appointing academic and technical specialists. In 1993-95, for example, assistance was given to five universities in Africa and the Caribbean to run applied Masters courses in various fields through collaboration with more advanced universities elsewhere.

Where a training programme has been highly successful, the Secretariat assists in its transfer elsewhere in the Commonwealth for the benefit of another region—a programme on the management of economic reform, for example, was recently transferred from India to Kenya. Capacity-building also takes place through an academic exchange programme where over the past two years, over 55 faculty members from 47 institutions in developing countries spent between two and eight weeks in institutions in other parts of the Commonwealth to share experiences, exchange learning materials, obtain new teaching materials and acquire new techniques and teaching methodologies.

Training and other assistance in human resource development is described in various subject areas elsewhere in this Report and a list of consultancies and projects is at Appendix II.



*Training in tools technology in Nigeria .... which is provided under a special programme*