

## PREFACE

The papers included within this volume were prepared to assist the Group of Experts which Commonwealth Heads of Government, meeting in August 1979, had requested the Secretary-General to assemble in order "to investigate and report on the factors inhibiting structural change and a sustained improvement in economic growth" and to "identify specific measures by which developed and developing countries, Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth, might act to reduce or eliminate such constraints as a matter of urgency". The Group consisted of ten experts who served in their personal capacities and were drawn from a representative range of developed and developing countries. During the first half of 1980 they met three times, and in July 1980 their Report was published by the Commonwealth Secretariat under the title "The World Economic Crisis : A Commonwealth Perspective".

Most of the papers were drafted within the two months between the first and second meetings of the Group. Two were written by consultants to the Secretariat and the remainder by staff of its Economic Affairs Division. The short time available for the work ruled out new and major research efforts, and the papers represent an effort to assemble, digest and present background information on some of the principal issues pertinent to the Group's terms of reference. Conclusions expressed in the papers are, of course, those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of members of the Group or of Commonwealth Governments.

Seven groups of issues are covered by the papers, viz. the past record of and future prospects for economic growth, the special problems of the least developed countries, the balance of payments problems of developing countries, the trend toward protectionism in OECD and the need for positive adjustment policies, the energy issue, the current state of commodities, food and agriculture, and the relationship between disarmament and development.

Despite the short time in which the papers were drafted, it was felt that their content would be of interest to a wider audience than the Group of Experts for whom they were written. It should, however, be emphasised that no attempt has been made to update or otherwise revise the papers in the light of hindsight. They are essentially as submitted to the Group.

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