

Secretariat Assistance to NGOs

7. The Commonwealth Secretariat, through its Information Division should:

- increasingly make its communication resources and expertise available to NGOs;
- give priority to its current project to publish a comprehensive directory of NGOs operating in the Commonwealth.

8. The Non-Governmental Organisations should also regularly provide material for inclusion in Secretariat publications, and adopt a policy of actively publicising their work nationally and internationally.

9. While the potential of NGOs in furthering Commonwealth understanding is properly the central theme of this report, it is not practicable to divorce this from the total picture of Commonwealth information and education at the multilateral and national levels.

Inadequacy of Commonwealth Information/Education

10. This Commission of the Dalhousie conference urges Commonwealth governments to make a conscious effort to promote the role of the associations. Both the official and unofficial Commonwealth need to give more attention to the importance of communication and education in maintaining the credibility of an association that is so relevant in dealing with some of the principal social, economic and development problems in the world today.

11. In particular, the Commission is concerned at the continuing failure to provide the Secretariat's Information Division with funding and staff adequate to its task. Compared with other international bodies, the Commonwealth at present allocates an unrealistically small percentage of its budget for essential information and education. The Secretariat's Information Programme should, in consequence, receive more direct and indirect support for the development of pragmatic and cost-effective programmes.