

## REPORT OF COMMISSION "C"

INCREASING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMONWEALTHNGOs Information Potential

1. Non-Governmental Organisations -- demonstrating the practical benefits of Commonwealth co-operation in a specific and tangible fashion -- can contribute substantially to the understanding of the Commonwealth at the all important "people to people" level.
2. There is a tendency to speak of the virtues of the Commonwealth in a generalised way that makes minimal impact on the media and leaves the public with little feeling of involvement or self-identification with the Commonwealth.
3. The down-to-earth programmes of the NGOs, combined with their independent character, can help to focus public attention on the true scope and potential of the Commonwealth relationship.
4. It is prudent and desirable to generate a broader base of support for the concept of the modern Commonwealth. In sustaining the association in the longer-term, it is essential to counter ignorance and indifference by ensuring that the Commonwealth constituency at large has an appreciation of the continued value of the Commonwealth in terms of their own interests and circumstances.
5. A more determined and comprehensive campaign to publicise the practical work of the NGOs would make a positive contribution to Commonwealth understanding. The organisations -- assisted and strengthened by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation and the Commonwealth Foundation -- should be encouraged and equipped to embark on programs of education and information.
6. A few Commonwealth NGOs -- the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association for example -- have been active and successful in publicising both their own role and the work of the Commonwealth of Nations. On the other hand, the Commonwealth Press Union is an NGO that, because of its restricted membership and limited representation in the new Commonwealth, has so far failed to live up to its potential.