

COMMUNIQUE

1. The eighth meeting of the Consultative Committee, representing the member Governments of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and South East Asia, was held in Wellington from 4 to 8 December 1956.

2. The meeting reviewed the progress, and considered the problems of development, during the past year, in the countries of the area and surveyed the present economic position of the individual countries, and of the region as a whole.

An assessment was made of some of the tasks ahead for the countries of the Colombo Plan in South and South East Asia.

A draft report prepared by officials in a preliminary meeting from 19 November to 1 December 1956 was discussed by Ministers who approved the text of the Fifth Annual Report, for publication in member countries' capitals on or after 15 January 1957. The discussions were full, frank and cordial and not the least value of the meeting lay in the friendly personal association between the representatives of the member Governments.

3. In the region as a whole several significant advances were made in both the planning and execution of economic development programmes during the fifth year of the Colombo Plan. In 1955-56, there was progress in the development of the area as a whole, although this progress was not uniform. National income continued to rise at a rate slightly in excess of population growth. Most of the Colombo Plan countries in 1955-56 contributed to and benefited from the continued expansion in world industrial production and trade. Agricultural production, on balance showed a little improvement over the previous year; there was an increase in mining output, particularly in petroleum production in the area. Significant progress was made in industrial production as a result of greater utilization of existing equipment and expanded facilities

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