

remain important, particularly for the developing countries. Britain has engaged in efforts to assist developing countries in negotiating terms of association with the EEC which might well contribute to an increase in their economic prosperity.

The association has grown into a very useful vehicle for consultation at all levels. At the top level, the heads of government have of recent years inclined to a meeting every two years. Their meeting in Ottawa in August 1973 is the third to be held outside London, the others being in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1966 and Singapore in 1971. Apart from heads of government meetings, there have been numerous regular or periodic meetings of ministers and officials on functional matters and an almost continuous succession of meetings on a broad spectrum of international relations, including law, trade, development assistance, education and youth matters. Through such consultations, the Commonwealth continues to act as an instrument for practical international co-operation along functional lines. Economic assistance for the less-developed members has long been a matter of concern. The Colombo Plan was a Commonwealth initiative arising from the consideration of the political and economic problems of South Asia by Commonwealth foreign ministers meeting in Colombo in January 1950. As the plan of assistance emerged in the first few months of 1950, a decision was taken to invite non-Commonwealth countries in the area to participate in the Plan. This was done to ensure economic progress throughout the whole of South and Southeast Asia. Development assistance programs for the Commonwealth countries in Africa and in the West Indies are further examples of the way in which economic assistance has been channeled bilaterally from the wealthier to the less-developed members. A further step toward practical co-operation for development was taken by heads of government at the Singapore conference of 1971 in their decision to expand the Commonwealth Program for Technical Co-operation by creating the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, to which all members in a position to do so contribute for activities in the field of training and education.

The Commonwealth has been active in the field of education, where, under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, scholarships are awarded by 16 countries. Since the Plan was launched, over 5,000 awards have been granted throughout the Commonwealth. In a wider context, Commonwealth ministers concerned with youth matters met in Lusaka, Zambia, in January 1973 to complete a Youth Program designed to improve the lot of young people in member countries.

The Commonwealth Foundation was established at the 1965 prime ministers' meeting with the purpose of administering a fund for