

Introduction

Of the 53 members of the Commonwealth, 49 are developing countries, for whom the main challenges are the elimination of poverty and the promotion of sustainable economic and social development. It is not surprising therefore that a central pre-occupation in Commonwealth discussions and programs is co-operation among member countries for development.

The Commonwealth includes some of today's most dynamic economies, as well as those for whom development remains a daunting task. It is made up of both large countries and many small ones with populations of less than 1.5 million. The Commonwealth thus provides a rich opportunity for its members to learn from each other's experience and draw lessons for economic and social management.

Co-operation among Commonwealth members is varied including the Commonwealth Science Council, the Commonwealth Youth Program and the Commonwealth of Learning. I will focus today on the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation as the most visible development arm of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation or CFTC was established over 25 years ago. It was conceived to encourage all member countries, including the smaller and least developed, to contribute to what was then seen as a new operational partnership.

This sense of partnership was also the focus of the CFTC's mandate and mode of operation, which were to use donor party financing to provide for co-operation between all members of the Commonwealth, drawing, where possible, on relevant experience, skills and training facilities in developing countries and to be highly responsive to the priorities and needs of

Notes for a presentation to the Commonwealth Colloquium by

Today, the CFTC is regularly used by developing countries, and particularly the smaller ones, as a major and distinctive benefit of the Commonwealth.

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Commonwealth Technical Co-operation into the Next Millennium

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