

## INTRODUCTION

Planning for the Dalhousie Conference began in May, 1974, after consultations with officials of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Department of External Affairs (Canada) and officers of the Royal Commonwealth Society. At that time, the Foundation was busy making preparations for a seminar on co-operation among professionals, since held in Kingston, Jamaica in January, 1975. Simultaneously the Royal Commonwealth Society was working towards a one day conference of London-based Commonwealth non-governmental organizations, eventually held under the title of "The Official and Unofficial Commonwealth" in June, 1975. The Dalhousie Conference drew upon the experience of those involved in these events, but broadened the scope of representation with the object of bringing together officers of non-governmental organizations from all parts of the Commonwealth. Canadian and Commonwealth Secretariat officials were also invited.

Every effort was made to have as representative a gathering as possible consonant with our decision to try to limit the number of participants to sixty so as to have a viable working group. The last minute withdrawal of five participants from the "developing" Commonwealth was unfortunate, but unavoidable. The gathering in Halifax brought to the plenary sessions and the commissions a range