

agenda outline for the 1975 Heads of Government Meeting and set up a mechanism for a review of Secretariat activities. A study on a proposed Commonwealth Centre for Applied Studies in Government, which had been referred to them by government leaders, was examined and a Program for Applied Studies in Government approved for administration by a new Division of the Secretariat. Heads of government also frequently refer projects to more specialized Commonwealth meetings. Discussion at Ottawa of a Commonwealth Development Bank resulted in finance ministers looking into the idea at their meeting in 1973 and, in 1974, in their authorizing the Secretary-General to investigate the feasibility of a Commonwealth Investment Bank.

At the ministerial level, there are a number of Commonwealth meetings held on a regular basis. Finance ministers, for example, confer every year, immediately before the meeting of the World Bank, in order to review and discuss recent developments in the international economy. In addition, there are regular meetings of ministers of law, health and education, as well as meetings of other ministers when circumstances warrant them, such as the 1973 meeting of youth ministers in Zambia to arrange for the implementation of a Commonwealth Youth Program. Officials of Commonwealth governments also confer regularly to consider technical matters.

Commonwealth functional co-operation

Co-operative ventures constitute an expanding area of Commonwealth activity. Economic assistance for developing members has long been a matter of concern -- the Colombo Plan was a Commonwealth initiative arising from consideration of the political and economic problems of South Asia by Commonwealth foreign ministers meeting at Colombo in January 1950. As the scheme for 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. A further step toward practical co-operation for development was taken by heads of government at Singapore in 1971, when they agreed to change the Commonwealth Program for Technical Co-operation into an expanded Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. Developing as well as developed members make voluntary contributions to the CFTC to support its activities in the fields of technical assistance, export development, training and education. The CFTC, at the mid-point of its third year of operations, had undertaken or was examining requests for over 300 projects in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and the South Pacific. The operation of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan has made the Commonwealth very active in education. Since the Plan was launched, 16 countries