

development; third, in the field of public information and education about the nature of the Commonwealth and its practical value; fourth, in sport. These four areas are ripe for expansion and co-operative development as circumstances dictate and resources permit. This process could be advanced by the secondment of qualified personnel from NGOs to work within the Secretariat.

5. Only a handful of pan-Commonwealth organisations operate in these areas at present. The most coherent group has been built up by the Commonwealth Foundation in the professional field, but even here there are gaps, e.g., in finance and education. The immense task of creating a wide popular awareness of the value of Commonwealth activity is in great need of strengthening. The Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth Institute are making an important contribution but in most Commonwealth countries there are no comparable institutions. The development of such organs must be a primary objective.

6. Repeated references have been made to the need to create what has variously been described as a resource, nerve or information centre. Its aims would be to serve as a catalyst for national NGOs to increase awareness of the Commonwealth, as a provider of source material and as a focus for Commonwealth interest. The Commission draws attention to the network of Professional Centres which the Commonwealth Foundation has helped to build up across the newer Commonwealth. Subject to the co-operation of the existing membership of such Centres, their buildings and services could in most cases and at relatively small cost be expanded to cater for their wider aims.

7. Other areas of activity such as sport and the Arts provide an invaluable opportunity to enlist the interest and involvement of people who otherwise would remain unmoved and unconcerned about the Commonwealth.

8. The Commission concludes that:

- (a) the ability of NGOs to be creative, flexible and quick-acting in support of national policies needs to be more positively recognised by Commonwealth governments;
- (b) further steps must be taken, primarily by the official Commonwealth, to stimulate and sustain the growth of NGOs where there is an identified need and to strengthen co-operation between NGOs in relevant fields of activity;