

Indeed, sometimes the will to work together leads countries to reach beyond old groupings, and form new issue - specific coalitions, sometimes against old friends. That is happening today in agriculture, where an Australian initiative, called the Cairns Group, has drawn together countries like Canada, Hungary, Zaire, Thailand, Argentina - that is to say, countries from NATO, the Warsaw Pact, ASEAN, the Non-Aligned Movement, and others - to try to force changes to the subsidy practices of the European Community, the United States, and Japan.

In these world circumstances, there is an unusual value to international organizations that grew up together, as distinct from international organizations that were put together. It is, indeed, the difference between a family and an organization.

The Commonwealth is a family that works. In addressing major world issues, it has changed the course of events. One example was the problem of the supply of western arms to South Africa. As a result of Commonwealth decisions, in the early 1970's, several countries which were once major arms suppliers joined the military embargo against Pretoria, adding directly to the costs to Pretoria of its racist policies.

The Commonwealth also works in practical everyday ways. One of the best examples is the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation. It is virtually unique in that almost all members contribute, and it makes maximum use of experts from developing countries. Its various programs cover the spectrum of development assistance. The General Technical Assistance Program helps countries obtain qualified experts from abroad. The Program of Fellowships and Training sends students throughout the Commonwealth. The Export Market Development Program offers assistance in promotion, marketing, organizing trade fairs and export regulations. A small technical Assistance Group helps with taxation, law, statistics, and finance. Under this Program Canada has helped Botswana with health planning, Vanuatu with lumber exporting and Tuvalu with free legal services. A Canadian Computer Project helps 17 countries keep accurate and up-to-date statistics on their international debts.