

**The official and  
unofficial  
Commonwealth**

61. Heads of Government considered the Report of the Advisory Committee on Relationships between the Official and the Unofficial Commonwealth and endorsed the conclusion that non-governmental organisations were an under-utilised resource. They agreed that official Commonwealth bodies at all levels, national, international and regional, should make a determined drive to establish regular exchanges with the unofficial sector. In this way the energies and expertise of non-governmental organisations would be more effectively harnessed to programmes of social and economic development, and to increasing information, understanding and appreciation of the Commonwealth among the general public. At the national level, Governments should take appropriate measures to improve contact with NGOs and to channel assistance to and through them. They requested the Secretary-General to encourage Commonwealth consultative bodies dealing with technical and professional matters to invite representatives of NGOs to meetings in an observer capacity.

**Women and  
development**

62. Heads of Government noted that in conformity with the decision taken at their London Meeting in 1977, the Secretary-General had carried out an assessment of all Secretariat programmes with a view to ensuring that appropriate provision was made for women both as participants in and as beneficiaries of such programmes.

63. Heads of Government also noted that the review revealed scope for greater involvement of women in Secretariat programmes and for those programmes to be more relevant to the needs of women. They recognised that to achieve significant and quick progress in this area a focal point was needed within the Secretariat to assist the Secretary-General in responding to identified needs and priorities of Governments and help the Secretariat to plan its programmes so as to take full account of the needs of women. They, therefore, agreed that an Adviser to the Secretary-General be appointed, with such supporting staff as were necessary, to co-ordinate and monitor action in this area.

64. It was recognised, however, that to a large extent progress depended on the policies of member Governments. In particular Governments should be encouraged to ensure that women played their full part in activities organised and training programmes funded by the Secretariat, and that in their requests for assistance, development projects which would be of direct benefit to women should receive due priority.