



Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit Annual Report August 2002 - July 2003

1 Staffing

The staffing during the year, linked to projects, was as follows:

Richard Bourne, Head (Indigenous Rights in the Commonwealth project, DFID funding; enhanced human rights mechanism for the Commonwealth, FCO funding; dissemination of E-Commerce competitiveness report, ComSec/CFTC funding)

Dr Helena Whall, Project Officer (Indigenous Rights in the Commonwealth project, EC funding)

Amanda Shah, Project Officer (Commonwealth Civil Society project, FCO funding)

Savita Bailur, Development Officer (Electoral Modernisation project, London University funding; E-Competitiveness project, ComSec/CFTC funding)

Dr Claire Auplat, Associate Fellow (Commonwealth Civil Society project, not funded)

Magdalena Muir, Associate Fellow (Indigenous Rights in the Commonwealth project, not funded)

Prune de Montvalon, part-time Events Organiser (Diversity Matters Forum, FCO + Commonwealth Foundation + London Development Agency funding)

Chaz Morse, part-time Events Organiser (Indigenous Rights in the Commonwealth London workshop, DFID funding)

2 Projects

Indigenous Rights in the Commonwealth Project

This, the biggest project currently undertaken by the CPSU, saw the conclusion of the DFID-funded section focused on socioeconomic rights, with a London workshop and the publication of a report, "Invisible lives". Dr Whall carried forward the major research and advocacy effort, with two visits to Geneva to observe negotiations for a Declaration on Indigenous Rights, coordination of two regional workshops in Cape Town and Georgetown (see below) and liaison with the Commonwealth Association of Indigenous Peoples. She and Professor Paul Havemann wrote a joint submission to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, "The Miner's Canary".

Civil Society in the Commonwealth Project

Following publication of "Joining Up the Commonwealth: a response to governmental calls for increased coordination with civil society", Amanda Shah worked closely with NGOs, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation and the Royal Commonwealth Society on pushing forward post-Coolum ideas for accreditation to the Commonwealth, and focus groups; the proposal for Commonwealth centres was not pursued. Two new thrusts for the project promoted youth access to Commonwealth non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations, and the extent to which Commonwealth bodies are promoting the Harare Principles.

E-Competitiveness Project

This project, conducted jointly with the Commonwealth Secretariat and involving contributions from Ram Venuprasad, Savita Bailur and Paul Baker, concluded with a major publication (see below), and a Caribbean regional workshop focused on the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and the role of government regulation. Participants at the regional workshop in Port of Spain testified to the timeliness of this work..

Electoral Modernisation Project

This development project, conducted by Savita Bailur over an intensive three month period, was designed to research a major fundable project on the modernisation of electoral processes in the Commonwealth, to enhance participation and utilise ICT. She ran a workshop, took part in a ComSec registration exercise in Antigua and Barbuda and funding proposals were presented to DFID and other potential funders.

Enhanced Human Rights Mechanism for the Commonwealth

This technical study, being undertaken by Richard Bourne, commenced in May 2003 and will lead to a report in time for the meeting of Commonwealth officials at the Committee of the Whole in November, 2003. It follows strong pressure from Commonwealth NGOs for the setting up of a Commonwealth High Commissioner for Human Rights and is also investigating the case for Ministerial Adviser on Human Rights to the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG).

3 Conferences, workshops, seminars etc

The CPSU had a busy schedule throughout the year. The largest conference was the Second Diversity Matters Forum, in March 2003, with some 80 participants, at Senate House, London University; it was mounted in conjunction with the Australian Multicultural Foundation, and supported by the London Development Agency, Commonwealth Foundation and FCO. In addition there were Indigenous Rights workshops in Cape Town, London and Georgetown; a Civil Society workshop for Commonwealth advocacy in West Africa in Accra, in July 2003; and sundry CPSU lunchtime seminars at 28 Russell Square, London. The CPSU and the International Trade Centre supported ComSec and the National E-Commerce Secretariat, Trinidad & Tobago in a conference on "E-Commerce Competitiveness for Small Business Development in the Caribbean Region" in July 2003. It was also able to host press conferences in

connection with the Indigenous Rights in the Commonwealth Project, for example an event for Chief Ted Moses and a Minister from the provincial government of Quebec, and another for Chief Coon Come, of the Assembly of First Nations.

4 Publications

Reports:

Joining up the Commonwealth, Amanda Shah, August 2002

The Miner's Canary, Paul Havemann and Helena Whall, August 2002

Invisible Lives, Richard Bourne, May 2003

Fostering Competitiveness in the Commonwealth through electronic commerce:

Experiences and policies adopted in four Commonwealth countries, Ram Venuprasad,

Savita Bailur, Paul Baker, July 2003

Book chapter:

"Indigenous self-determination in the Commonwealth", Helena Whall in a book entitled Unfinished constitutional business? Rethinking Indigenous self-determination, Aboriginal Studies Press, Australia, 2003

Journal articles:

"Survival of the youngest: pan-Commonwealth NGOs and the younger generation"

Amanda Shah, The Round Table, April 2003

"Indigenous peoples in the Commonwealth -- a story of exclusion"

Helena Whall, The Parliamentarian, July 2003

Policy Briefs prior to Ministerial meetings:

Finance Ministers, Jeremy Scott-Joynt, September 2002

Law Ministers. Richard Bourne, November 2002

Youth Ministers, Abigail Page, May 2003

5 Administrative (MoU etc)

As part of a process of consolidation, the CPSU and Institute of Commonwealth Studies agreed a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2003, and a pan-Commonwealth Advisory Board for the CPSU is being put in place. Professor James Manor, who has been an Academic Adviser to the CPSU since its inception and is a former Director of the ICS, kindly agreed to be the first Chair of the Board. The CPSU, celebrating its fifth year of existence, has invited the Chairperson of the Commonwealth, the Rt Hon John Howard of Australia, to give a special address when he visits London in November 2003. A promotional brochure for the CPSU is being prepared. Plans are being laid to raise core funding for the Unit. An informal group of Friends of the CPSU in Barbados, chaired by the Hon Billie Miller, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, is organising an event there in early 2004 and making approaches to members of the expatriate community.

6 Other (website utilisation etc)

Although complimentary copies of all CPSU publications are sent to Commonwealth Governments and others the key dissemination vehicle now is the website,

www.cpsu.org.uk which is maintained by the Red Bicycle consultancy. Leaving aside heavy use by CPSU staff the website is now getting around 7,000 requests a month, and the level of demand has tripled between July 2002 and July 2003. Requests are made for the latest research output (in July 2003 the majority of requests were for "Invisible Lives" but there were significant numbers for "Fostering Competitiveness", "Factors Shaping Public-Private Partnerships", and "Joining up the Commonwealth" -- although the last two were by then a year old). Inquiries are also made for job opportunities, and for information on staff. After the UK high numbers of requests are coming from Canada, Australia and non-profit bodies; many inquiries are now coming from non-Commonwealth countries, including Austria, Switzerland and the US.

7 Forward planning

Since its inception the CPSU has been working to two broad policy headings -- globalisation, and a Harare programme (related to outcomes of the Harare CHOGM, 1991). A policy consultation in November 2001 encouraged the Unit to work in the area of communal conflict, multiculturalism and diversity and the Diversity Matters Forum of March 2003 was the first result; one of its recommendations was that, subject to funding, the CPSU should research a typology of communal conflict in different areas, examining the varied responses and the success or failure of policy measures.

The CPSU may take on some policy work on water, developed by the Commonwealth Science Council, which could involve its first foray into the environmental field. It has been successful in obtaining a Commonwealth Professional Fellowship (from the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission) for Dr Ehsan Latif an NGO person in the tobacco control movement of Pakistan; he will be at the CPSU for three months in early 2004, working on Commonwealth Health policy in this area. A project on teacher mobility, based at Nottingham University and supported by the CPSU, has received funding from DFID and will commence in 2004.

The CPSU is exploring the possibility of projects on local democracy, on the role of the Commonwealth in reform of the United Nations system, on the interface between the Commonwealth and European Union after May 2004 when three countries will belong to both organisations, and on a sequel to the Indigenous Rights project which may look at the role of Indigenous peoples, land rights and the management of fragile habitats. All of these depend of course on funding being forthcoming.

8 Funding

Sometime during the year in question the CPSU moved above £700,000 in its total income since its start in December 1998. Accounts presented with this report show an income in excess of £210,000 in the year August 2002-July 2003.

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