

COMMONWEALTH NURSES FEDERATION

ANNUAL REPORT 1999/2000

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Nurses Federation (CNF) is a credible and participatory federation of national nursing associations throughout the Commonwealth. As one of the most active Commonwealth professional associations the CNF continues to maintain a high profile in both pan-Commonwealth and regional activities.

MEMBERSHIP

The CNF was pleased to welcome the Cameroon Nurses Association into membership during the year. The Lesotho Nurses Association also returned to active membership after a gap of ten years. Paid up members number thirty-five. Efforts continue to improve membership levels.

Elections for President, Vice President and four Board members will take place in June 2001. As required by the CNF's constitution nomination papers for candidates for these offices were circulated to member associations in April 2000.

OFFICERS

Mr Michael Stubbings was appointed as Executive Secretary on 1 August 1999 in succession to Mrs Patricia Larby. Mrs Larby is thanked for her outstanding service to the CNF over a six year period.

The Executive Secretary represented the CNF at various meetings and events in the UK including meetings of the Commonwealth Health Professional Associations. Due to increased business particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS (see also below) the Associations plan to meet regularly in future instead of on an "ad hoc" basis.

The Executive Secretary attended the CNF European Regional Conference in Guernsey in March 2000 and the meeting of Commonwealth Health Ministers in Geneva in May 2000. In October 1999 the Executive Secretary and the Treasurer attended a reception at Buckingham Palace given by Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh for Commonwealth Non-Governmental Organisations.

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING

Prior to the Heads of Government meeting in Durban, South Africa in November 1999 two meetings of non-governmental organisations were held, one by the Association of Commonwealth Universities and one involving Commonwealth Health Professional Associations, to consider the situation concerning HIV/AIDS. The CNF participated in the latter meeting. Following these meetings a joint Communique was submitted to the Heads of Government urging them to call for a Global State of Crisis in this regard.

Subsequently the Heads of Government agreed that HIV/AIDS constituted a Global Emergency and urged all sectors to co-operate in increased efforts to tackle the problem including new methods of prevention and accessibility to drugs treatments (paragraph 55 of the Durban Communique, November 1999). This was drawn to the attention of member associations with the suggestion that they should approach their Health Ministers concerning action in this regard.

COMMONWEALTH STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

The CNF continues to co-operate in the work of the reconstituted Steering Committee, which now includes the entire CNF Board and a number of Commonwealth Chief Nursing Officers. The Steering Committee met in New Delhi, India in March 2000 at the time of the International Womens' Conference. At the same time the Committee held a regional workshop in conjunction with the CNF (see under Regional Activities below).

The work programme of the Steering Committee includes:

1. National action plans for nursing and midwifery
2. Developing guidance on nurse leadership
3. Developing guidance on the nursing/midwifery roles and competencies in relation to HIV/AIDS
4. Harnessing the experience of retired nurses
5. Proposals for two further workshops in 2000/2001.

COMMONWEALTH FELLOWSHIP

The CNF made three nominations to the Commonwealth Fellowship programme operated by the Commonwealth Foundation but was unsuccessful in obtaining a fellowship on this occasion.

FINANCE

The Commonwealth Foundation continued its much appreciated support to the CNF. First, it provided a core grant of £12,500 to meet the CNF's basic operating costs. Second, it granted a sum of £7,000 to assist with the costs of a CAMHADD/CNF workshop in Bangalore, India (November 1999), the Steering Committee/CNF workshop in New Delhi, India and the CNF European Regional Conference in Guernsey, Channel Islands.

CNF subscription income for the year totalled £8,310. In view of the difficulties experienced by small associations in even meeting the minimum subscription of £50 no increase in subscription rates was made.

A sum of £5,000 was received from the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist the attendance at the New Delhi workshop of nurse leaders from countries in the South Asia region.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

The CAMHADD workshop in Bangalore, India was held in association with CNF and addressed the theme **Safe Motherhood and Child Survival – Prevention of Birth Asphyxia in Developing Countries**. The outcome was the development of a strategy for reducing maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity. The workshop was successful with around forty Commonwealth participants including trainers of birth attendants, nurses and policy makers.

The workshop in New Delhi was organised by the Steering Committee for Nursing and Midwifery in conjunction with the CNF. It covered **Nursing and Midwifery: Tackling the Human Resources Issues**. The CNF President, Mrs Peggy Vidot (Seychelles) led a session on Quality, assisted by Mrs Saramma Samuel (India), CNF's Regional Board Member for South Asia. Around 50 Commonwealth nurses and midwives participated in the event including representatives from India, Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

The third European Regional Conference of the CNF in Guernsey, Channel Islands was attended by around 300 delegates, mainly from the three regional countries Cyprus, Malta and the UK and Guernsey and Jersey. The theme of the Conference was **Nursing in the New Millennium: a Shared Vision for the Future**. Dame Betty Kershaw, CNF's Regional Board Member for Europe, delivered a keynote address on this theme. Mrs Vidot gave a plenary presentation on the Commonwealth perspective of nursing following presentations by Mrs Corinne Pevac (Malta), Mrs Angeliki Tapakoude (Cyprus) and Mrs Christine Watson (UK) on the European nursing scenario and the situations in their respective countries. The Conference also embraced a large number of workshops, concurrent sessions and symposia on a wide variety of subjects.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The CNF Board was instrumental in producing **CNF's Strategic Directions 2000-2005**, which was published in May 2000. The document embodies a guide for the CNF for the next five years. It covers the purpose of the CNF, its vision, its key goals, its principles and values and its key strategic directions. It has been circulated to all Commonwealth national nursing associations, who may use it as a working document, and Chief Nursing Officers.

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications were produced and distributed during the year:

1. Issues Nos. 23 and 24 of the **CNF Newsletter**
2. **Moving Nursing Forward: Asserting Our Right to Care** – Papers from the 2nd European Regional Conference, Malta (March 1998)
3. **Commonwealth Nursing and Midwifery Associations and Chief Nursing Officers – Directory 2000**
4. **Commonwealth Nurses Federation's Strategic Directions 2000-2005**.

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