

# COMMONWEALTH NURSES FEDERATION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2000/2001

### INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Nurses Federation (CNF) is a strong, credible and participatory grouping of national nurses associations from Commonwealth countries. As one of the most active Commonwealth professional associations the CNF aims to influence health policy, develop nursing networks, improve nursing standards and strengthen nursing leadership throughout the Commonwealth.

### MEMBERSHIP

The CNF was delighted to welcome the Montserrat Nurses Association back into membership after a long absence following a series of natural disasters. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation gave notice of termination of membership in May 2000 and will leave the CNF at the end of September 2001.

### GOVERNING BOARD

Mrs Peggy Vidot from the Nurses Association of the Republic of the Seychelles ended her second term in office as President and stood down at the Biennial Meeting in June as required by the Constitution. Mrs Vidot is thanked for her outstanding service as President for eight years and her earlier service as a regional Board member for eight years. The Royal College of Nursing, UK, accorded her worthy recognition in October 2000 by making her an Honorary Fellow of the College for her services to international nursing.

Following election procedures nominations were received from Mrs Reena Bose (for President) and Miss Beulah Duke (for Vice President). Elections for four regional Board member positions produced the following results in March:

Atlantic – Ms Lynda Kushnir Pekrul (Canada), elected to replace Mrs Karen Chalmers (Canada)  
East, Central & Southern Africa – Professor Philda Nzimande (South Africa), elected for a second term  
Pacific – Ms Alumita Bulicokocoko (Fiji), elected to replace Mr Nigel Kee (New Zealand)  
West Africa – Mrs Emma Banga (Ghana), elected for a second term.

Mrs Chalmers and Mr Kee are thanked for their excellent, pro-active services in pursuit of the Federation's objectives.

### OFFICERS

Mr Michael Stubbings began his second year as Executive Secretary on 1 August 2000. Mr Douglas Beattie completed his second term as Treasurer in June.

The Executive Secretary represented the CNF at various meetings in the UK during the year, including those of the Commonwealth Health Professional Associations' Para 55 Group. This group was formed to promote and monitor the implementation of actions of Governments in response to paragraph 55 of the Heads of Governments' Durban Communiqué (November 1999) relating to HIV/AIDS.

He also represented the CNF at an important Commonwealth conference at Marlborough House, London on 7 December 2000 on **The HIV/AIDS Crisis – A Commonwealth Response**. At this event NGOs agreed to work together to urge governments to commit themselves to address the problems associated with HIV/AIDS and declared that they would work in partnership with all relevant bodies to combat the epidemic.

The Executive Secretary attended an Observance for Commonwealth Day at Westminster Abbey in March and a Dinner, also in March, at the Royal Overseas League to meet the year's Commonwealth Foundation Fellows.

In addition, he visited Cyprus in July 2000 to assist with preparatory arrangements for the CNF European Conference in 2002 and attended the meeting of Commonwealth Health Ministers in Geneva in May, when he also took the opportunity to visit ICN and WHO to discuss matters of mutual interest.

## COMMONWEALTH STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

During the year the CNF continued to assist in the work of the Steering Committee. The Committee met in Brisbane, Australia in October 2000 (with the South Pacific Nurses Forum), in Harare, Zimbabwe in March (with meetings of the International Confederation of Midwives and in London in June (with the CNF Biennial Meeting). In Brisbane and Harare the Committee also held regional workshops in conjunction with the CNF (see under Regional Activities below).

In this period the Committee also issued guidance on:

- developing the nursing/midwifery contribution in respect of HIV/AIDS
- workforce issues (recruitment and retention of nurses and midwives).

The Committee also instigated a scheme to utilise the experience of retired nurses in an advisory capacity.

## COMMONWEALTH FELLOWSHIP

For the second year running the CNF made three nominations to the scheme operated by the Commonwealth Foundation but was unsuccessful in obtaining a fellowship. However, Mrs Rose Oluoch, a former President of the National Nurses Association of Kenya, did receive a fellowship following nomination by the Professional Centre of Kenya.

## FINANCE

The Commonwealth Foundation again provided a most welcome grant to the CNF. This comprised a core grant of £11,750 towards the CNF's basic operating costs and £8,250 to assist attendance at a CNF workshop in Port of Spain, Trinidad (July 2000), two Steering Committee/CNF workshops in Brisbane, Australia (October 2000) and Harare, Zimbabwe (March 2001) and the Biennial Meeting of the West African College of Nursing (March 2001).

Subscription income for the year totalled £9,169. Subscription rates remained unchanged.

A sum of £10,000 was received from the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist with the costs of and participation in the two Steering Committee/CNF workshops in Brisbane and Harare mentioned above.

## REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

The CNF's Atlantic region workshop in Port of Spain, Trinidad was held at the time of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Conference of the Caribbean Nurses Organisation. It addressed the theme **Professional Role of Nurses: Development and Leadership**. There were around 30 participants. A keynote address was given by Janey Parris, Chief Programme Officer, Health Department, Commonwealth Secretariat, on nursing leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The workshop aimed to strengthen networks of senior nurses and to foster capacity building related to nurse leadership. A number of recommendations were made concerning the production of a regional newsletter, the development of a vision statement and the need for workshops on the family nurse practitioner and mentoring.

The Steering Committee/CNF workshop in Brisbane, Australia was held in association with the Australian Nursing Federation immediately prior to meetings of the 10<sup>th</sup> South Pacific Nurses Forum. The theme of the workshop was **Nursing and Midwifery: Human Resources and Leadership Issues**. Around 50 delegates attended from most countries in the region including some of the more remote island states. The workshop explored recruitment, retention, leadership and working aspects with the emphasis on informal sessions. Delegates shared many ideas and perspectives, which they were eager to take back to their own countries.

The Steering Committee/CNF workshop in Harare, Zimbabwe was held prior to the Regional Conference of the International Confederation of Midwives. The workshop was arranged for nurses and midwives in Commonwealth countries in Africa and covered the nursing aspects of **HIV/AIDS**. There were around 65 attendees. The workshop included sessions on the essential role of nursing and midwifery, education of nurses and midwives, strengthening management in community based health care and palliative care.

The Executive Secretary prepared a poster for circulation at the International Nursing Satellite Meeting arranged by the Southern African Development Community Nurses and Midwives prior to the XIII International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa in July 2000. This indicated support for the meeting and drew attention to paragraph 55 of the Durban Communique. The poster was well received. Professor Philda Nzimande, Board member, opened the meeting, which was very well attended.

Since the CNF could not be directly represented at the 10<sup>th</sup> South Pacific Nurses Forum in October 2000, Jill Illiffe, Federal Secretary of the Australian Nurses Federation kindly agreed to read a paper written by the Executive Secretary. This covered the CNF's objectives, the Commonwealth Action Plan for Nursing and Midwifery, the work of the Commonwealth Steering Committee, the CNF programme of work and its future vision and key goals.

At the Sixth Biennial Meeting of the West African College of Nursing in Monrovia, Liberia in March 2001, Mrs Emma Banga, Board member, extended fraternal greetings from the CNF and presented a paper on "Strengthening the Team Approach on Child Care with Emphasis on the Nurse/Doctor Relationship".

## **PUBLICATIONS**

The following publications were produced and distributed during the year:

1. Issues 25 and 26 of the **CNF Newsletter**
2. **Health Sector Reforms: Opportunities and Challenges for Nurse Leaders in East, Central and Southern Africa.** Report of a workshop, Mbabane, Swaziland (August 1998).

## **BIENNIAL MEETING**

The Biennial Meeting was held in London on 20/21 June. Mrs Reena Bose (India) was elected as President for a four-year term and Miss Beulah Duke was re-elected as Vice President for a second term.

Mr Michael Stubbings was re-appointed as Executive Secretary for a further four years with a salary review after two years. Mr Douglas Beattie was re-appointed for a further four years as Treasurer.

July 2001