

Address
by Mr. G. Mangion,
Director of Education

Mr Chairman, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour and privilege for me as Director of Education to be addressing this Seminar. One of the reasons for this is because young people are present. This is a clear indication of our concern about youth. We would like to listen to our young people and look forward to hearing all about your deliberations.

The problems you will be discussing are the problems of today. Young people have become a major concern of governments, organisations and individuals. We are living today in a day and age of emotional development which cannot be separated from physical development. We have to learn to live with this development. Personal values of faith, love and compassion are important to young people today as much as they were to their predecessors.

It is hoped that the Seminar which has brought together so many young people and adults interested in social problems will achieve its aims and help towards a better understanding of the complex problems of young people in Malta.

Youth today is a subject that all too frequently occupies the headlines of the world press. Youth represents an important section of the population and when we shall talk about youth we shall be referring to thousands of young people with aspirations towards a better world full of energy and vitality.

Development is a means of achieving social justice. Our youth must be equipped with the skills and scientific know-how to fit into the changing patterns of our present day society. The greatest pressure for change comes from the young sector. The young can be important and demanding.

We are concerned with the basic education of our young people and to help young people to find their place in a changing society. Young people should be offered opportunities of various kinds and emphasis is to be laid on the relationships that should exist between the older generations and young people in order to satisfy the educational and social needs of a demanding young population.

The purposes of this Seminar are to pool the experiences of all those connected with youth work. It is sincerely hoped that you will all do your best to contribute to its success. In your sessions you must remember the role youth plays in the whole set-up of society. Your contributions must therefore be uninhibited and objective. The young people among you have an important contribution to make by telling what they really feel about society and their own needs. The educationalist has also a contribution to make through his experience in youth matters. In your deliberations, it is hoped you will keep in mind the local scene. Malta is a small country, but its younger generation is dynamic. Malta has also a contribution to make in this field.

The Commonwealth Secretariat should be thanked for the honour and privilege it has bestowed upon us through its representatives at this Seminar. Indeed this Seminar provides an opportunity not only to exchange views and ideas but to promote the closest collaboration among young people from other countries. It is hoped that through this Seminar our younger generation will benefit most and that effective co-operation will be established.

Youth is moving forward towards its future amid the hopes and challenges of a modern era. Those concerned with the welfare of youth should also move ahead and recognise these needs. We must be aware of present-day needs of young people. We must be conscious of an urgent need to change, and change rapidly, in order to meet present-day needs. Commercial enterprises are quite aware of these needs. What we must really be thinking about is a new approach that will bring more and more young people to the forefront, an approach which gives young people a certain amount of flexibility and an opportunity to work out their own programmes and to feel confident in themselves. Our young people are challenging our present structures and our approaches - it is up to us to rise to the occasion and face the challenge.

This will mean that we will have to question many assumptions that we have taken for granted.

We must be aware of the problems that young people have to face in the educational set-up, the frustrations created by the work situation, the new trends in industry and the influence of the mass media.

Our youth organisations are working with many groups of young people who in one way or another come into contact with them. Yet there is an increasing number of "unattached" young

people, for whom provision must be made. New forms of informal education need to be explored. Society can help by reconsidering its approach to the whole area of youth work and each one of us must do all we can to encourage experimentation.

In conclusion I extend a cordial welcome to you Mr Chairman and to the other members of the Commonwealth Secretariat and to the honoured guests who have come to Malta to participate in this Seminar.

I wish to express my sincere wishes for the success of this Seminar and look forward to hearing about your deliberations. I am sure that youth in Malta will benefit a lot from the Seminar because it has given us an opportunity to come together and participate in a direct way in the development process. Your presence here this morning is an indication of the spirit of co-operation that exists and it is sincerely hoped that you will achieve your aims for the future development of youth in Malta.