



Council of Ministers of Education, Canada  
Conseil des ministres de l'Éducation (Canada)

**16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers**  
**Cape Town, South Africa**  
December 11-14, 2006

**Report of the Canadian Delegation**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The 16<sup>th</sup> triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) was held in Cape Town, South Africa, from December 11 to 14, 2006. Delegations from 36 Commonwealth countries convened to engage in discussion on the main theme “Access to Quality Education: For the Good of All.”

The parallel fora, Teachers, Youth, and Stakeholders, took place at the same time. It was the first time that a Teachers Forum was held.

The Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards were adjudicated prior to the conference, and the winners were announced at the closing ceremony on December 14, 2006.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION**

The Canadian delegates met prior to the conference to exchange information and discuss important issues. Mr. Chris Brown, from the Canadian Consulate, attended this meeting.

The objectives of the Canadian delegation at the 16<sup>th</sup> CCEM were to

- assist the head of the delegation during the plenary sessions
- contribute to the discussions in the ministerial committee sessions
- make clear Canada’s support for the intention of the Cape Town Communiqué and work toward an improved final text (see Appendix 1)
- support Canada’s foreign policy with respect to the Commonwealth
- highlight Canada’s position as a leader in education
- identify possible alliances among countries in the event of contentious issues
- consider appropriate follow-up in Canada regarding the outcomes of the conference

The role of delegation members included

- attending plenaries to hear ministerial interventions
- monitoring all ministerial committee sessions and parallel sessions

- gathering and analyzing the conclusions, recommendations, and amendments proposed in committees and workshops in which they participated and noting country alliances

## **I. MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE: KEY SUMMARY POINTS**

### **SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING**

Raymond Théberge, Linda Lowther, and Rémi Tremblay represented Canadian authorities at the Senior Officials Meeting.

### **Scholarship Central Facility**

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) proposed the establishment of a small facility that would (1) undertake functions not covered by the national agencies of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), such as maintaining the Plan's Web site, (2) increase collaboration among national agencies, and (3) create an endowment to expand scholarships in developing countries to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CSFP in 2009.

Canada agreed in principle with the proposal but insisted that the Commonwealth Secretariat not undertake the task of establishing and managing the central facility and that none of its staffing and financial resources be used for such ends. Canada's objective is to refocus the secretariat's functions to promote democracy, good governance, and human rights.

Consequently, ACU offered to fund up to three people to establish and manage the small facility. Furthermore, ACU underscored that the endowment would be funded mostly by corporate donations so that member states are not required to contribute.

### **Number of Scholarships**

As the second largest funding participant in the CSFP, Canada endorsed the ministers' proposal to increase the number of CSFP awards to 2009 by 2009 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the plan. This endorsement does not require additional funding from Canada as Canada and the UK are increasing the number of short-term awards and reducing the number of long-term awards, so that more students can benefit from studying abroad. Furthermore, other countries committed themselves at the conference to increase the number of awards they would offer.

### **Higher Education Facility**

ACU proposed to reorganize itself into a tertiary education facility to better respond to today's higher education needs and realities. Canada has not approved or rejected

the proposal but has volunteered to participate in a Ministerial Working Group to study it further.

### **Canada's Scholarship Program Renewal**

Concern was evident among member states of the possibility that Canada would discontinue its Commonwealth Scholarship Program. Some have noted that this would in fact destroy the entire scheme as Canada is one of its largest contributors, second only to the UK. However, Canada assured member states that the Government would honour all existing multi-year scholarships no matter the outcome. Treasury Board has since renewed DFAIT's multi-year commitment authority for this program.

The report of the Senior Officials Meeting is provided as Appendix 2.

### **OPENING CEREMONY OF THE CONFERENCE**

The opening ceremony for the ministerial conference and parallel events included a cultural performance and welcoming addresses from dignitaries, including the Right Honourable Don McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary General, and the Honourable Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education, South Africa.

### **MINISTERIAL PLENARY SESSIONS**

#### **Ministerial Committees**

Two broad themes were addressed in the ministerial committees:

- Education "For the Good of All"
- Quality education

Four subthemes were discussed by ministers and participants:

- The role of the non-state sector
- Equity
- Quality and the teaching profession
- Quality in a globalised world

#### **Issues**

Ministers and participants were highly engaged. They exchanged views and shared practices. A number of cross-cutting themes emerged:

- The need to ensure the full participation of girls in schooling by providing the necessary contributions to facilitate their participation

- The need to ensure that access is not achieved at the expense of quality
- The need to ensure that access is not limited to primary schooling
- The necessary presence of the private sector in the delivery of programs
- The urgency of recruiting and training a sufficient number of teachers
- The crucial role of health and the pervasive and debilitating impact of HIV/AIDS in African countries (The 53 member states of the Commonwealth constitute 30 per cent of the world's population, and 60 per cent of people living with HIV/AIDS reside in the Commonwealth.)
- The importance of a holistic approach to education (hierarchy of needs; incorporation of nutrition and psychological health; addressing obstacles to education: transportation, racism, lack of relevant and current materials; multilingualism in education)
- The importance of technological literacy as an added means to empower young learners in an age of globalization
- The access to education and educational materials in remote and rural locations and for nomadic groups of people
- The state of the teaching profession (There is a stigma attached to teaching that is not prevalent with other professions such as engineering and medicine.)
- The acknowledgement of multiple roles a learner may have outside of school (income earner, caregiver, etc.)

The ministers shared practices, approaches, and initiatives that promoted access and quality. However, certain prepared presentations limited the interaction between participants.

Canada should support the Secretariat to ensure that ministers are meaningfully engaged on key topics.

Only the sessions most relevant to Canada are reported in this section.

### ***Session 2 – Commonwealth of Learning***

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) sought to raise its level of funding to \$12 million from \$9 million. The UK committed to contribute 30 per cent of that amount. Canada (CIDA) has been the largest contributor for the past three years, contributing \$2.6 million in 2006, which was about 29 per cent of the budget. Canada will maintain this level of support in 2007. Canada applauded the commitment of the United Kingdom to COL and the promised increase in financial support.

### ***Session 2 – Commonwealth Secretariat, Social Transformation Programmes***

The Social Transformation Programmes Division includes three sections: Education, Gender, and Health.

The Education Programme focuses on two core areas of key priority for all members: achieving good quality universal primary education and reducing gender disparity in access to primary and secondary education, particularly in the least developed Commonwealth States and small states. To achieve this, the Secretariat will operate at a number of strategic levels promoting education as a key priority in all Commonwealth agendas, facilitating matching of educational needs with the broader range of Commonwealth resources available, and demonstrating and sharing best practices for wider replication. Drawing on the strength and diversity of experiences across the Commonwealth, the Secretariat will act as a knowledge-based network in collaboration with the wide range of Commonwealth centres of excellence and expertise in the sector.

Education is a basic right and an effective means of preventing the transmission of poverty to the next generation. Yet 115 million children of primary school age, half of them in the Commonwealth, are out of school. The majority are girls. To help address disparities in education and improve its delivery, the Secretariat is working with Commonwealth and global partners toward the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### ***Session 6 – Quality in a Globalised World***

The head of delegation intervened on this topic. See Appendix 3 for the full text of this intervention.

- In addition to the view of tertiary education as struggling between the pursuit and development of knowledge on one hand and its susceptibility to market forces on the other, it is important to recognize that an especially high emphasis on higher education in a developing region may exacerbate internal inequality, rather than promoting continued learning.
- As outlined by the presentation of Dr. Mahmood Mamdani, Herbert Lehman Professor of Government and Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University, the creation of sustainable and quality higher education must be an accompanying priority of all Commonwealth member states. He noted that there cannot be a renaissance without an intelligentsia. Skills taught and curriculum followed must be oriented in a manner conducive to a learner's place within the globalized world of increased communication and mobility.

## ***Session 7 – Plenary Discussion***

Following statements from representatives of the parallel fora, Ms. Burke provided a short response in order to facilitate engaging and productive discussions (see Appendix 4).

### *Challenges and Dilemmas facing the Quality of Education*

Canada is a strong supporter of ensuring the quality of education through approaches based on justice, human rights, and citizenship training. It has demonstrated this commitment by reporting on the implementation of the 1995 UNESCO Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, in October 2001, by reporting to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and UNESCO on the progress made in Education for Sustainable Development (2006), and on Canada's implementation of the UNESCO Declaration against discrimination in education (2006, draft).

Educational stakeholders in Canada also believe that the growing globalization and commercialization of higher education may have a serious impact on its quality. Therefore, Canada supports the Commonwealth's role in providing forums for exchange and development of frameworks, such as the protocol on teacher recruitment. We believe it may be valuable for the Commonwealth to examine whether the debate should be widened to include the issues and challenges posed by globalization to the other levels of education.

## ***Session 10 – 16<sup>th</sup> CCEM Conclusions and Recommendations***

### *Cape Town Communiqué (see Appendix 1)*

Dr. Raymond Théberge was part of the Drafting Committee to work on the Cape Town Communiqué and Message to CHOGM 2007.

### *Message to CHOGM*

Please see Appendix 5 for the text of Minister Burke's intervention. The full text of the Message to CHOGM 2007 from Commonwealth Education Ministers 2006 is included as Appendix 6.

## **CONCLUSION**

Canada was instrumental in ensuring that the Commonwealth Secretariat does not undertake more responsibilities in addition to its already full mandate and commit more resources to additional programs, while supporting many of the worthwhile initiatives proposed by various parties. Canada is still considered a key partner in the development of the Commonwealth and is keenly sought for its support to legitimize new initiatives and maintain older ones.



## **II. BILATERAL MEETINGS**

Several bilateral meetings took place parallel to this conference.

### **BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

The Honourable Joan Burke, Dr. Raymond Théberge, Mr. Rémi Tremblay, and Ms. Tanya Hawco met with Dato Haji Sheikh Adnan Sheikh Mohamad, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education, Hj Samat bin Hj Jamahat, Head of Research and Development, and Hj Aminudin bin Hj Mohd Yaakub, Education Officer. In follow-up to this meeting, the CMEC Secretariat contacted the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) to provide information regarding the visit of the Deputy Education Minister of Brunei in April 2007. Dr. Raymond Théberge should be meeting the deputy minister during this visit.

### **SCOTLAND**

Hugh Henry, Scottish Minister of Education, Mike Ewart, Head of the Scottish Executive Education Department, and Tim Simons, Head of International Team, met with the Canadian delegation. Various topics were discussed, specifically, the means to increase high school completion and multicultural settings.

### **SWAZILAND**

The Honourable Joan Burke met with the Honourable Themba J. Msibi, Minister of Education, Kingdom of Swaziland. Dr. Raymond Théberge followed up on this meeting by sending a letter offering to provide information on their areas of interest.

### **ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITIES**

The members of the delegation met with Dr. John Rowett, Secretary General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The possibility of creating a ministerial working group on tertiary education was discussed.

### **III. PARALLEL FORA**

The participants at the Teachers Forum, the Youth Forum, and the Stakeholders Forum reflected on the theme “Access to Quality Education: for the Good of All.” The results of their discussions were presented to ministers.

#### **STAKEHOLDERS FORUM**

*Panel presentation on education and the labour market chaired by The Honourable Joan Burke*

Ms. Burke chaired a panel presentation and discussion on education and the labour market during the Stakeholders Forum. The first speaker was Michael Young from the U.K. Mr. Young has done research on various models of training for instructors in vocational and technical colleges. He noted the challenge for instructors to keep up to advances in technologies and research while at the same time having the proper teaching methodologies. He suggested that a tripartite model of training by universities, colleges, and industry might be the best model.

Chris Humphries, Director General of City and Guilds in the U.K., spoke about the necessity to up-skill or re-skill adults in the workforce to keep enough people in the skilled labour market.

Finally, Joshua Mallet from the Commonwealth of Learning spoke about the organization’s work to enhance and match skills with labour needs in various developing countries. He also noted examples of micro-economics tied to learning in various parts of the world.

Minister Burke then noted the highlights of the presentations and entertained questions from the audience.

The Statement of the Stakeholders Forum is included as Appendix 7.

#### **TEACHERS FORUM**

There were two types of participants in the Teachers Forum: classroom teachers and school administrators made up the first, and union leaders and teachers or school administrators involved in union work made up the second.

The key task for the Teachers Forum was to look at educational issues from a teacher’s point of view — two themes were more specifically covered:

- Access to Quality Education for All: The Importance of the Teacher
- Teacher Professionalism and Professional Development.

Of special interest were the following presentations:

- Audrey Osler, Research Professor and Director of the Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, School of Education, University of Leeds, spoke on the topic of teachers as agents of change.
- Dr. Olive Shisana, President and Chief Executive Officer, Human Sciences Research Council, presented on the Health of Educators — an International and South African Perspective. The issue HIV/AIDS was at the top of her list, and she spoke eloquently about the issue and how it is affecting educators as a social group and of HIV/AIDS education and the role of teachers in dealing with this issue.

This final presentation brought home the urgent need for action in the field of education. It is through education that children/societies throughout the world will have a hope to raise themselves out of poverty. Quality Education For All is a human right. It is our responsibility as members of the Commonwealth and the world community to ensure the goal is reached.

The resulting Statement from the Teachers Forum is attached as Appendix 8.

## **YOUTH FORUM**

Young people involved in the Youth Forum were 16 to 23 years of age and represented varying backgrounds and experiences. A representative from South Africa's National Youth Commission also chaired and participated in lively and impassioned discussions. Discussion was organized in

- Seven plenary sessions led by guest speakers
- Breakout discussions

Serving as vital actors in the pursuit of quality and accessible education, youth delegates shared a mutual sense of responsibility to their countries and to the young people that they represented. They valued their position as both contributors and recipients in the topic of education.

Delegates appreciated the breadth of issues covered and found particular interest in the concept of "Each one, teach one." Delegates enthusiastically shared their ideas and thoughts and sought to continue the debate on the access to quality education for all young people.

Through consultations and presentations, delegates reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers is carried out with the same energy and vitality present in the 16<sup>th</sup>.

The following are notable messages from presenters of the Youth Forum:

- Ransford Smith, Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth, spoke of the unprecedented opportunity that exists in a new form of people's Democracy, spearheaded by young people.
- In his keynote address, the Honourable Enver Surty, Deputy Minister of Education for South Africa, applauded the historically eminent achievements of young people and Women in South Africa and acknowledged the challenges the country continues to face.
- Salim Vally of the Education Policy Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand spoke ardently on the necessity of teaching people to be human — to be active agents of positive change. Mr. Vally noted the late Katarina Romasevski, the first United Nations Special Rapporteur on Education (1998-2004), in her undying pursuit of quality education and as an individual to whom the highest respect is paid for her contributions to this discussion.
- Professor Linda Chisholm of the Human Sciences Research Council noted that there is an important facet of education that is not as highly valued but still crucially important. This learning is achieved in diversity in schools. This is the result of a marked increase in cross-border migration in the last 30 years.
- Peter Kpordugbe, Consultant for the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), spoke on the topic of "What is a Relevant Education?" Citing evidence from a variety of areas, Mr. Kpordugbe posited that learning must be active, not passive, and must do more to prepare learners for the "real world."
- Helena Fehr of the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver addressed the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in providing learning opportunities for learners. Ms. Fehr prompted delegates to be active listeners and participants in the use of ICT to create widespread access to quality education for learners, especially those in rural and remote locations.
- Professor David Plummer, Commonwealth/UNESCO Regional Chair in Education (HIV/AIDS Health Promotion), of the University of the West Indies, discussed integrating HIV and AIDS into education programs. Mr. Plummer poignantly stated that most discussions of AIDS begin with a death toll and that continued attention will not be paid to this epidemic without an initial vision for the future. A change in current social norms among peer groups was identified as vital.

- Rosemary Mangope, Chief Director of the Department of Arts and Culture in South Africa, maintained that the degree to which education is successful is directly correlated with the idea of “spirit.” Arts, culture, heritage, and sport should be infused in the delivery of education. Sport is an especially important unifying agent.

The Statement of the Youth Forum is attached as Appendix 9.

**16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM)  
11-14 December 2006  
Cape Town, South Africa**

**Cape Town Communiqué**

1. The 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM) was held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 11-14 December 2006. It was chaired by the Hon Naledi Pandor, MP, Minister of Education, South Africa, and opened by the Hon Trevor Manuel, MP, Minister of Finance, South Africa.
2. Delegations from 36 countries, of which 29 were led by Ministers, attended the Conference. The structure of this Ministerial meeting included three important parallel components: Stakeholders Forum, Youth Forum, and, for the first time, a Teachers Forum. Ministers, delegates from the other three parallel fora and partner organisations met to reflect on the theme ‘Access to Quality Education: for the Good of All’. The discussions of the three parallel fora provided an input into Ministerial deliberations and included wide ranging and diverse perspectives. Also in parallel with the Conference, was a successful exhibition showcase. The Statements from the three parallel Forums are appended.
3. The host Minister, the Hon Naledi Pandor, summarised the essence of the meeting as follows: *“Our hope for this Conference is that it should move us beyond talkshop towards a process that concretely develops strategies for promoting and monitoring, and where necessary, supporting progress.”*
4. Professor Mahmood Mamdani, the Keynote Speaker, highlighted the link between general and higher education. He emphasised that *“If your object is to transform general education, you have to begin with higher education. For higher education is the strategic heart of education; it’s where choices are developed.”*
5. Ministers reaffirmed that education is a fundamental human right and integral to the democratisation and development objectives of the Commonwealth.
6. Ministers reviewed progress in education across the Commonwealth in the context of the Six Action Areas agreed at 15CCEM in Edinburgh 2003 and they reaffirmed their commitment to accelerate (i) the achievement of Universal Primary Education; (ii) elimination of gender disparities in education; (iii) improvement of quality in education; (iv) use of Distance Learning to overcome barriers; (v) support to education in difficult circumstances; and (vi) the mitigation of the impact of HIV & AIDS on education.

7. Ministers appreciated the Commonwealth Secretariat's specific interventions in the following areas: identification and sharing of good practices relating to universal primary education and the elimination of gender disparities; the issue of boys' under-achievement; education in difficult circumstances; improving quality in education through teacher training; development of a Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol; ScoreCard for Girls' Education; impact of HIV & AIDS in education; and nomadic education.

8. Ministers noted that some Commonwealth countries have achieved Universal Primary Education, and others are close to achieving this Goal. However, several Commonwealth countries are in danger of not meeting the agreed targets. In recognition of the fact that lack of resources, amongst other factors, acts as a constraint to increasing enrolment and ensuring attendance, Ministers expressed the need for increased public spending in education.

9. Ministers agreed that the three parallel Forums should continue as parallel events at the next Ministerial Conference in 2009. Ministers also agreed that the Good Practice Awards should continue following a review of the form, process and structure based on the 16CCEM experience.

10. Ministers recognised the contribution of the new Commonwealth-UNESCO Chair for HIV & AIDS and Education established at the University of the West Indies. They appreciated the fact that it has strengthened the education sector's response to HIV & AIDS in the Caribbean region.

11. Ministers approved the Secretariat's proposed Work Plan for 2007-2010. They appreciated the increased collaboration between Commonwealth agencies working in education and supported the suggestion that the Commonwealth Secretariat, COL, ACU and Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan pursue increased harmonisation of their forward plans. They urged for close monitoring and reporting on progress.

12. Ministers deliberated on the themes of the non-state sector, equity, quality and the teaching profession, and globalisation. They noted the importance of these themes in supporting the Commonwealth education objectives. The sub-theme of 'For the Good of All' permeated all discussions.

13. Ministers underscored the view that governments have primary responsibility for the provision of education. They encouraged the non-state sector to support education and training, and agreed that in order to facilitate equal access, quality education and to avoid exploitation, governments should develop appropriate regulatory measures for the non-state sector.

### **Commonwealth of Learning**

14. Ministers complimented the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) on its work and achievements over the past three years, 2003-2006. They endorsed the Plan, 'Learning for Development, 2006-2009', and recognised the need to mobilise the proposed level of

funding of C\$12 million for the Plan period. Ministers noted with appreciation the United Kingdom's offer to contribute 30 per cent to the total funds provided by other Commonwealth countries for COL for the Plan period as an incentive for increased funding. They also noted the commitment of the Governments of Cyprus, India and New Zealand to increase funding to COL.

15. Ministers acknowledged that Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has improved access, and enhanced quality of education and training in many parts of the developing Commonwealth. The implementation of the Virtual University of the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is a step in the right direction as it seeks to bridge the digital divide and encourage collaboration.

#### **Association of Commonwealth Universities**

16. Ministers noted the report from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), including a proposal for the creation of a Ministerial Working Group to consider the possible establishment of tertiary education facility.

#### **Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan**

17. Ministers noted the three year survey of activity under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) and welcomed the significant expansion of activities in recent years. They approved the recommendations that a small central unit be created to undertake those responsibilities that cannot be undertaken by national agencies; that greater collaboration should take place between agencies; that an endowment fund be established to mark the 50th Anniversary of the CSFP in 2009; and that a target of 2009 scholars and fellows on award be set for 2009. Ministers also welcomed an offer from the Association of Commonwealth Universities to support the new unit.

#### **Commonwealth Institute/Centre for Commonwealth Education**

18. Ministers noted the report of the Commonwealth Institute, including the request to Ministers to sustain their support to the Centre for Commonwealth Education at Cambridge University.

#### **Stakeholders Forum**

19. Delegates discussed three key issues around the 16CCEM theme: access to quality education; improving the quality of education; and financing and resourcing quality education. They acknowledged the key barriers that continue to obstruct access to quality education and suggested approaches to deal with them.

#### **Teachers Forum**

20. Delegates proposed that initiatives be developed to address Education for All which build upon effective strategies and good practices for teaching and learning. The need for regular monitoring and evaluation was emphasised.



## **Youth Forum**

21. Delegates recommended to Ministers the need for demonstrable prioritisation of education through higher budgetary allocations, and monitoring the use of resources. They further recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat facilitates the review of institutional frameworks of the education sector to address emerging challenges.

## **Action Plan**

22. Ministers reaffirmed the principles enunciated in the Edinburgh Communiqué and agreed:

- to accelerate and sustain the attainment of UPE and the elimination of gender disparities at all levels of education;
- to strengthen the education sector's response to HIV & AIDS including age-appropriate HIV & AIDS education in every education system within the Commonwealth;
- to provide quality training for teachers to meet the needs at all levels of education;
- to train more teachers to meet the needs of UPE, and to devise strategies for increasing the number of young people coming into the teaching profession;
- to ensure continuing professional development of teachers and to develop and implement quality assurance measures;
- to encourage and promote school to school links and at other levels of the system as a means of fostering mutual understanding and to improve the quality of learning outcomes;
- to expand access to secondary as well as tertiary education;
- to encourage and increase parental and community involvement in education and school-based activities;
- to encourage education about the Commonwealth and its values, including human rights, in our systems of education;
- to give more attention to the issues of school leadership and governance in our efforts to attain quality education; and
- to expand and strengthen collaboration with partner agencies, non-state sector and civil society organisations with due regard for equity and quality.

23. Ministers directed the Secretariat:

- to provide regular reports of Commonwealth progress on achieving the MDGs in education and Education for All Goals, and to give priority to member countries at risk of not achieving MDG targets by 2015;
- to review the implementation of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol and report to 17CCEM;
- to review the form and structure of the Education Good Practice Awards based on the 16CCEM experience;
- to constitute thematic working groups as determined by Ministers;
- to develop draft Terms of Reference and constitute a Ministerial Working Group to consider the proposal for the creation of an appropriate Commonwealth facility to respond to needs in tertiary education in the light of significant developments in this area; and

- to constitute a Ministerial Steering Committee to monitor progress on attainment of education related MDGs by Commonwealth member states and review implementation of the educational plan of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

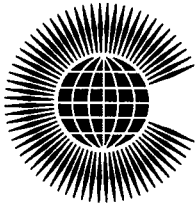
24. Ministers agreed to the attached message to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), to be held in Kampala, Uganda, 2007.

25. Ministers expressed their deep and sincere thanks for the warm welcome and outstanding hospitality extended by the Government of South Africa. They also appreciated the high level of efficiency with which the Conference was organised.

#### **17CCEM**

26. Ministers warmly welcomed the offer of the Government of Malaysia to host the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (17CCEM).

Cape Town, South Africa  
14 December 2006



# 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers

Cape Town, South Africa, 11-14 December 2006

CCEM(06)5

## REPORT OF SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

### Summary Conclusions and Recommendations of the Senior Officials Meeting

1. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) was held on Monday, 11 December 2006 at 1000-1600hrs. As Chair of SOM, Mr Duncan Hindle, Director-General, Department of Education, South Africa welcomed Senior Officials and Mr Ransford Smith, Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General, to Cape Town and to 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM.).
2. The Deputy Secretary-General also welcomed Senior Officials to the meeting and expressed gratitude to the host government, South Africa.
3. Senior Officials considered the 16CCEM conference documentation and arrangements, and recommended that Ministers approve the 16CCEM Provisional Ministerial Programme and Agenda set out in CCEM(06)3(Rev.4), and Conference Arrangements and Procedures CCEM(06)2.
4. Senior Officials commended the host Government and the Secretariat for engaging civil societies, teachers, and youth in the 16CCEM programme.

### Report on Commonwealth Secretariat's Education Work Programme 2003-2006 and Proposed Education Work Programme, 2007-2010

5. Senior Officials:
  - commended and approved the report of work carried out by the Secretariat since 15CCEM held in Edinburgh 2003;
  - noted the proposed future Work Programme. The Work Programme for 2007-2010 will take into consideration the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan for 2004-2008 and, in particular, its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in education:

Achieving Universal Primary Education and Eliminating Gender Disparities in primary and secondary education;

- Senior Officials recognised the efforts made by the Secretariat and member countries to address the Six Action areas of 15CCEM and progress achieved across the Commonwealth. They expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by the Secretariat in respect to: Developing a Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol; ScoreCard for Girls Education; Promising and Good Practices in Girls Education; Multigrade Teacher Training Modules; Study on Boys Under-achievement; Nomadic Education; and Education in Difficult Circumstances;
- noted that the role of the Secretariat's Education programme will primarily continue to be Advocacy, Brokerage and Catalytic. Senior Officials urged the Secretariat to reflect measurable outcome indicators in their future Plans. They also encouraged and emphasised the need for the Secretariat to ensure maximum coherence between its programme activities and those of partner organisations;
- appreciated the increased collaboration between Commonwealth agencies working in education and supported the suggestion that the Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) pursue increased harmonisation of their forward plans;
- noted the suggestion that there was need to review the implementation of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol, to share any emerging information, and to report to 17CCEM;
- complimented the work on the Teaching Profession being undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), and proposed that similar initiatives be extended to the Caribbean region;
- expressed a desire to see a component on school leadership and management reflected in the Commonwealth Secretariat Plan 2007-2010;
- requested the Secretariat to undertake a comprehensive study on Boys Under-achievement aimed at identifying effective solutions, especially in the Caribbean region; and
- noted that the impact of HIV and AIDS on societies is complex and urged member countries to take a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with the problem.

### **The Commonwealth of Learning**

#### **6. Senior Officials:**

- received "COL in the Commonwealth 2003-2006: Country Reports", a comprehensive overview of the work done in each country and commended COL for having demonstrated that distance and technology enhanced learning can contribute significantly to the achievement of the MDGs, the EFA goals and the Commonwealth priorities of peace, good governance and democracy. They also received and endorsed the Three Year Plan "Learning for Development" 2006-2009, which focuses on the three sectors of Education, Learning for Livelihoods, and Human Environment. They also noted with satisfaction the expected outcomes of the proposed initiatives: better ODL and ICT policies; effective systems; relevant materials and replicable models. Strategies for achieving these will include partnerships, south-south collaborations and networking;

- indicated they would encourage Ministers to support COL's work, endorse its Three Year Plan 2006-09 and provide the necessary support to implement it, including the mobilisation of the proposed level of funding of C\$12 million for the Plan period;
- noted with appreciation UK's offer to contribute 30 percent of this amount and to match any further funding raised by member countries for COL; and
- expressed strong desire to provide continued support for COL's work on the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), and proposed that the VUSSC programme include Mathematics, Science and Technology.

### **Association of Commonwealth Universities**

#### **7. Senior Officials:**

- noted and discussed the proposal presented by the ACU on the establishment of a higher education facility. They endorsed the recommendation put forward by ACU to establish a ministerial working party to study the proposal and make recommendations to CHOGM 2007; and
- noted the findings of the three year survey of the CSFP activities carried out by the ACU and the significant expansion of activities in recent years. They endorsed the recommendations of the CSFP: noted the proposal of the ACU for the establishment of a small facility that would undertake functions not covered by national agencies; the need for increased collaboration between national agencies; and the need to establish an endowment to expand scholarships in developing countries to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CSFP in 2009, together with a commitment to reach of 2000 awards by 2009.

### **Commonwealth Institute/Centre for Commonwealth Education**

#### **8. Senior Officials:**

- noted the report of the Commonwealth Institute on the sale of the Institute's premises and Centre for Commonwealth Education at Cambridge University, and the request to Ministers to sustain support to the Cambridge Centre; and
- agreed that the wording in the proposed text for inclusion in the Communiqué. Senior Officials agreed to the suggestion that the wording in the relevant paragraph be adjusted in the process of finalising the Cape Town Communiqué.

### **Referrals from other Commonwealth Meetings**

9. Senior Officials noted the referrals from other Commonwealth meetings, notably from Health, Youth and CHOGM 2005.

### **Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards**

10. Noted that the adjudication panel was finalising its report and agreed that the future of the Good Practice Awards should await that report. It also expressed satisfaction that a number of good practices have been identified in education across the Commonwealth.

## Written Submissions to Ministers:

### 11. *Commonwealth Values in Schools:*

- Senior Officials recommended further discussion between the Secretariat and CEC regarding the possible formation of a Stakeholders' group on Commonwealth Values in Schools. They noted the decision taken by CHOGM 2005 on Respect and Understanding and the recent creation by the Commonwealth Secretariat of a Commission on Respect and Understanding.

### 12. *50<sup>th</sup> CCEM Anniversary of CCEM and CSFP*

- Endorsed the suggestion to use 17CCEM to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CCEM and CSFP in the Commonwealth.

### 13. *Future Meetings and Reviews:*

- Endorsed the recommendations put forward by the Secretariat concerning future ministerial meetings and the possibility of consolidating parallel events in the future (at the discretion of the host country). Senior Officials supported the formation of thematic working groups as a possible alternative to the mid-term review meetings.

14. Senior Officials agreed to the establishment of an open-ended Drafting Committee to work on the Cape Town Communiqué and Message to CHOGM 2007. The following countries volunteered to participate: South Africa (Chair), Bahamas, Cameroon, Canada, India, Samoa, Singapore, Uganda, UK, supported by Secretariat staff.

Commonwealth Secretariat  
ICC  
Cape Town

December 2006

**16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM)  
December 11-14, 2006  
Cape Town, South Africa**

**Ministerial Plenary Session 6 – Quality in a Globalised World**

Intervention by The Honourable Joan Burke -

My comments will refer more to higher education, since in the Canadian context, the impact of globalization has been felt more at the postsecondary level, although it is not clear how long that situation will remain.

Before I leave the public education systems, though, I would like to comment on an aspect of globalization that elementary and secondary schools in Canada are called on to address, and which they do very well – that of being laboratories for fostering a culture of inclusionary practices and celebrating diversity. The global is brought to the local, creating exciting learning environments.

Education in general, and higher education in particular, plays a major role in developing sustainable socioeconomic, political, and cultural structures. The priority is creating the intellectual critical mass essential to a country's sustainable growth.

The challenges are many and daunting, shared to a greater or lesser degree by all Commonwealth countries: poverty, both individual and community; weak socioeconomic policies; governance problems; and difficulty in training a qualified labour force.

So, it appears that there are two competing visions of globalization of higher education, one where diversity is celebrated and knowledge, research and researchers, faculty and students move relatively freely, contributing to sustainable development locally and more broadly; and the other where these are tradable commodities predominantly defined by market values.

Universities, and in the case of Canada, colleges, are called upon to take on several roles: training the labour force; training the trainers; and themselves becoming learning institutions, future-oriented and innovative, displaying both passion and compassion.

Our challenge is to determine the roles that governments and others will play in these developments.

**16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM)  
December 11-14, 2006  
Cape Town, South Africa**

**Ministerial Plenary Session 7 – Plenary Discussion**

Canadian education experts believe that there is a strong need for an expanded vision of quality of education, one that encompasses not only the quality of programs, but also skills development as well as the specific needs of the various categories of learners. Quality education must also provide learners with lifelong support, including special education programs for young people with learning or social adjustment difficulties, as well as opportunities to retrain and re-enter the workplace or learning environments at various stages in life. This vision of quality can only be realized through a holistic, long-term approach to education, one that promotes strategies for learning throughout life and that encompasses all levels and all forms of education in a mutually reinforcing fashion.

Additionally, quality education, while founded on first language and culture, should help the student to gain access to the diversity of cultures and to cultural diversity, a key component of learning to live together.

The Commonwealth is a key forum in which member states can reaffirm their commitment to promoting cultural diversity through education, particularly at a time when globalization and the wider use of information technologies pose significant challenges to the preservation and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity.

From a general standpoint, educational authorities in Canada support the Commonwealth's efforts to sustain the debate and advance the knowledge about what is understood by "quality education."

Canada also sees the ongoing need for further engagement with our developing partner countries in support of the Education for All goals, and, in particular, goal 6, "improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills." Access is not enough to ensure that children achieve the basic skills and competencies that are essential to poverty reduction. Improved education quality and improved learning outcomes must be a core objective in conjunction with efforts to increase equity of access.



**16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM)  
December 11-14, 2006  
Cape Town, South Africa**

**Ministerial Plenary Session 10 – Message to CHOGM**

Intervention by The Honourable Joan Burke -

In conversations with my colleague ministers, we all agreed that one of the most heartening outcomes of the 16CCEM was the passionate involvement of the young people here in Cape Town in important educational issues. Clearly, your commitment to making a difference in the world is inspiring.

Your call for renewed understanding among people and countries is something that the Commonwealth can indeed take to heart. School curriculum is the ideal place to begin this journey of learning to live together. Commonwealth values of inclusiveness, equity, and the celebration of diversity should be an integral part of the education provided to young people.

**MESSAGE TO CHOGM 2007  
FROM  
COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS  
2006**

1. We, the Commonwealth Education Ministers, held our 16th triennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa from 11 to 14 December 2006 to review progress in education across the Commonwealth in fulfillment of the mandates from the Edinburgh 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) in the Six Action Areas. We benefited from the conclusions and recommendations of the Stakeholders Forum; Teachers Forum; and Youth Forum and commend the manner in which these fed into our own deliberations at 16CCEM.
2. We affirm that basic education is a human right and is central to the Commonwealth development efforts. Education plays a major role in improving health, reducing poverty, creating wealth, enhancing human security, and enabling active participation in a globalised world. Education is fundamental in developing democratic values and good governance. To this end we believe it is important to provide young people with opportunities to access quality education.
3. We affirm that in an increasingly divided and insecure world education has a critical role in creating a culture of peace, tolerance and mutual respect.
4. We noted with satisfaction the progress made by the Commonwealth Secretariat and member countries, in the Action Areas identified in the Edinburgh Action Plan, and the need to combine our efforts with our partners in civil society and the private sector to meet the targets of the Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.
5. We directed the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth education organisations to target and support on a priority basis member countries that are at risk of not achieving the education MDGs.
6. We identified key issues, opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed if our educational aspirations in the main theme of the Conference “Access to Quality Education: For the Good of All” are to be met. These included financing and resourcing education, barriers to gender equity and developing holistic educational policies.
7. We endorsed the 16CCEM recommendation on HIV & AIDs that we must sustain our individual and collective efforts to fight the spread of HIV & AIDS. We have committed ourselves to take urgent action to mitigate the impact of AIDS on education, including orphans, students and teachers.

8. We noted the proposal presented by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) to establish a Ministerial Working Group to consider the possibility of establishing an appropriate facility for tertiary education in the Commonwealth as an additional Commonwealth resource in education.

9. We commended the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) on its work and approved its three-year plan 2006-2009. We also supported its target of raising C\$12m for the Plan period. We noted with appreciation UK's commitment to provide a 30 per cent contribution to the total funds provided by other Commonwealth countries for COL for the Plan period as an incentive for increased funding.

10. We commended the Commonwealth agencies working in education, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan on their increased collaboration.

11. We discussed the major challenges faced by small and developing Commonwealth countries in ensuring that they have a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers to ensure universal access to a quality education. We believe that the development of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol is slowly improving the situation and discussed ways in which the Commonwealth could work together to improve the situation.

12. We agreed that Commonwealth Heads of Government should affirm the paramount importance of safeguarding the values, standards and quality of education.

13. In recognition of the critical role that education and training plays in contributing to governments' efforts to meet development goals, we urge Commonwealth Heads of Government to raise levels of funding for education.

Cape Town, South Africa  
14 December 2006

## **Statement of the Stakeholders Forum to the Ministers of Education**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The tone of the conference was set by three important keynote addresses. These situated the politics, delivery and experience of education in the Commonwealth today in the context of its history. The first by Ms Graca Machel called on governments to move away from rhetoric to concrete implementation plans and measurable goals. The second by Dr Blade Nzimande focused on the plight of the poor across the world highlighting the inequities in access and performance they experienced. Professor Mahmood Mamdani reinforced these messages. He argued that higher education was at the strategic heart of determining and shaping the vision of social alternatives in the former colonies and that in the context of its neglect during the colonial era and the pressure placed on it by market forces urgent structural solutions needed to be looked at to address it.

Outside of the keynote addresses, the Stakeholders' Forum was devoted to discussions revolving around the following themes.

### **1. ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION**

Key barriers that continue to obstruct access to quality education and impinge on learners' human rights include:

- The persistent shortages of financial, material and human resources at all levels of education in most countries of the Commonwealth
  - The persistence of conflict in some countries of the Commonwealth
  - The exclusionary use of English for learning and curricula that either ignore or undervalue indigenous knowledges or are disconnected from the modern world
  - Gender discrimination, violence against girls and the uneven strategies in different countries to address this continue to be a problem.
  - The lack of recognition of learners with disabilities and all other challenges
  - The marginalisation of children and teachers in rural areas, and
- that these need to be resolved in the distinct contexts of each of our countries.

Ways of addressing the above should include

1. Systematic monitoring through use of qualitative and quantitative indicators
2. An incremental approach to the EFA and MDG goals for purposes of better management of the implementation process and its sustainability
3. Negotiating reductions in the cost of key educational resources such as textbooks
4. Utilising, adapting and developing a wide range of educational technologies
5. School clustering for the sharing of successful implementation and practice lessons
6. Avoiding quick-fix temptations which include the use of inadequately developed distance and/or open learning higher education programmes
7. Balancing policy development and policy implementation and avoiding trade-offs between quality and equity
8. Promoting inclusive education as an important concept to ensure access and success for all learners, whatever their level of ability
9. Urging local communities to take ownership of the process for educational development including participating as producers of knowledge
10. Planning, development and resourcing the delivery of primary, secondary and higher education in a co-ordinated fashion.

### **2. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

This theme underpinned many of the presentations and discussions in the meeting. In the context of the diverse conditions facing education systems across the Commonwealth, as well as the increasing

challenges faced by cross-border provision, government remains the central agency for providing quality in education.

In relation to the above there needs to be

1. A focus on the continuing professional development of teachers concentrating on skills, subject content, evidence-based teaching methodologies, assessment methods and resource materials.
2. Improved teachers' capacity to prepare young people for local conditions in a global environment.
3. Alignment of interventions with the specific political, economic and social conditions framing education in the different countries – rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
4. Partnerships with civil society and private service providers to support training, research, production of materials and quality assurance.
5. Adequate resourcing for schools, teachers and communities to provide regular and constant opportunities for sport, physical education and cultural activities because they enhance self-esteem and learning
6. Cognizance of HIV/AIDS as a strong determinant for supply and demand of teachers as well as the conditions under which they work.
7. Integration of HIV/AIDS and all its associated implications within the curriculum
8. Continued commitment of governments to strengthening and adapting our national education systems in response to global regulatory frameworks
9. A development of dialogue between strategic partners to regulate student and labour flows across the world.
10. Addressing climate change and global warming at all educational levels
11. Promoting an understanding in schools of the Commonwealth's values for bridging all social divisions.
12. A holistic education policy, conceived within a lifelong learning frame.

### **3. FINANCING AND RESOURCING QUALITY EDUCATION**

Over the years countries have adopted different approaches to educational financing systems through centralization to decentralization. None of these has been linked directly to success. It is how one implements a financial system that matters. In relation to this, it remains incontrovertible that quality education requires adequate financial resources and their equitable distribution. Although government remains the main source of funding, there is need to consider the role of Non-State Provision (NSP) of education by religious organisations, civil society and the private sector. Frameworks for managing these relationships are needed. To advance these the following systemic developments are necessary:

- Strategic planning to determine priorities and action-plans that take into consideration the distribution of responsibility between the various levels of government and also other stakeholders
- The development of appropriate accountability mechanisms to be used at all levels of service delivery from the ministry to the classroom.

This financing should include infrastructural development but must prioritize:

1. An increase in the scale, length and intensity of teacher training, and developing guidelines within the Commonwealth for the recruitment of teachers
2. Focused and appropriate use of ICTs to support teaching and learning, and
3. Achieving resource equity and outcomes through linking schools within systems and across systems within the Commonwealth.

Serious consideration should be given to developing a coherent framework and architecture for the Commonwealth that addresses continuous commitment to strengthening and adapting national education systems and facilitating dialogue.

**16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers****Cape Town, South Africa, 12-14<sup>th</sup> December 2006****Statement from The Teachers' Forum****Preamble**

- a. Teachers and their organisations from thirty-nine Commonwealth countries met in Cape Town, South Africa, from 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> December 2006 concurrently with the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16 CCEM).
- b. This was the first ever Forum for teachers and their organisations from Commonwealth countries. The Forum fed directly into the Ministerial Conference. Teachers and their organisations welcomed this development at the Commonwealth level and expressed a strong desire for the Forum to be a permanent feature of CCEM.
- c. The Forum conveys its sincere thanks to Mrs Naledi Pandor MP, Minister of Education, South Africa, for hosting the Teachers' Forum, and her staff for their efficiency, kindness and courtesy. Special thanks are due to South African Council of Educators and the Education Labour Relations Council. The efficiency of the Conference's organisation and the warmth of the hosts' reception have been magnificent.
- d. The Forum engaged in discussions around the theme of the Ministerial Conference "Access to Quality Education for the Good of All". The Forum focused particularly on the role of teachers and their organisations in the achievement of high quality public education throughout the Commonwealth.
- e. Teachers and their organisations at the Forum reaffirmed their commitment to the aspiration of fully funded, high quality public education for all in the Commonwealth. The Forum reiterated in particular its commitment to the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) goals and to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

- f. The Forum discussed a range of issues in their full complexity and emphasised the important role of teachers and their organisations as partners in the achievement of fully funded, high quality public education for all.
- g. The Forum reviewed progress on quality education for all in the Commonwealth since 15 CCEM and acknowledged progress made so far. The Forum, however, also recognised that much more needed to be done. The Forum identified key issues, challenges and opportunities that needed to be addressed if its objectives were to be met.
- h. The Forum acknowledged the importance of teachers and their organisations as role models for young people, and their organisations being strongly committed to the Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct as expressed in Education International (EI) instruments. The Code is intended to act as a guide for teachers to help them maintain the high standards of their profession and uphold the highest integrity. In that context, the Forum recognised the responsibility of teachers to live up to the high expectations placed on the profession.
- i. The Forum welcomed the *Interim Report of the Working Group on the Professional Development of Commonwealth Teachers* convened by the Commonwealth Teachers' Grouping (CTG). The Forum endorsed the principle set down in the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol that "a structured and well-managed programme of teacher exchanges and of trade and skills ...can benefit individual teachers in their professional development as well as strengthen and enrich education systems."
- j. The Forum welcomed the first ever Teachers' Forum as a commitment from Ministers to institutionalised social dialogue with teachers and their organisations and asserted their belief that the Teachers' Forum concept should be replicated at individual country level, ensuring dialogue, consultation and negotiation.

### **The Context**

- k. The Forum noted that educational systems across the Commonwealth were working in a constantly changing environment within an increasingly globalised world with an ever-changing economic, social and political context. Included

within these challenges was the continuing issue of the impact of teacher migration.

- l. In the context of recent world events, the Forum took the view that it was vital for young people to be knowledgeable about international organisations including the United Nations and the Commonwealth. They should understand and apply the principles and values of the Commonwealth as defined in existing Commonwealth instruments.
- m. The Teachers' Forum emphasised the need for the realisation of education as a human right and teaching about human rights as a way of achieving social cohesion within Commonwealth countries.
- n. The Forum also asserted its firm belief that publicly funded education systems were the best guarantee of achieving social cohesion and equity in Commonwealth societies.
- o. The Forum noted, in particular, that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta in November 2005 "affirmed the importance of promoting tolerance, respect, enlightened moderation and friendship among people of different races, faiths and cultures... and of building a common platform of unity against extremism and intolerance" and that the Commonwealth Secretariat is to explore initiatives to promote mutual understanding and respect among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth. Under the leadership of Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen, the Forum noted, that a Commission is to be formed to take this work forward. The Forum emphasised the important role of education in promoting respect and looked forward to playing a major role in the development of this initiative.
- p. The Forum also noted that the principles contained in the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers were still applicable today. It noted, in particular, the statement within the Recommendation that "teachers' organisations should be recognised as a force which can contribute greatly to educational advance and which therefore should be associated with the determination of educational policy."



- q. The Forum welcomed the signing, on World Teachers' Day – 5 October 2006, of a Letter of Agreement between the International Labour Organisation and the Commonwealth Secretariat committing them to work together to advance the status and protection of teachers in the interest of quality education.
- r. The key point made by delegates from the Forum was that teachers and their organisations should be directly involved in developing policy and educational systems, including being consulted on educational reforms and spending plans. Noting the Dakar 2000 Declaration and Ministerial commitment to the need for involving civil society in government education plans, the Forum re-emphasised the need for institutionalised social dialogue between teachers, their organisations and governments at national, regional and Commonwealth level, particularly on EFA strategies.
- s. The Forum noted that all Commonwealth countries were signatories to the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and that many countries were not yet meeting their obligations in relation to access to education for all. The Forum recommended that the implementation of the Convention must include students' and children's participation in decision making. The Forum recalled that the Convention required that "parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child".
- t. The Forum acknowledged that small states in the Commonwealth, in particular those that are less economically developed, often faced issues relating to economies of scale. Countries working in difficult circumstances, for example, conflict, needed specific strategies to meet the aspiration of a fully funded, high quality public education for all.
- u. The Forum also acknowledged that information and communications technology (ICT) had the potential to play a significant role in the achievement of quality education for all, including in pre-service and in-service professional development of teachers. It recognised, however, that there remained a 'digital divide' apparent within and between different countries of the Commonwealth.

- v. The Forum recognised that the best 'social vaccine' against HIV/AIDS was education. It is proven that the higher the level of education, the less chance there is of becoming infected.
- w. The Forum made recommendations to Commonwealth Education Ministers and to teachers' organisations in the Commonwealth. Set out below are the key points raised on three inter-related themes and the recommendations.

## **1. THEME 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS**

### **1.1 Key Points**

- 1.1.1 It is recognised that 'professionalism' may be interpreted differently in different Commonwealth countries, according to local circumstances.
- 1.1.2 Continuing in-service professional development is critical to teacher capacity, as is quality pre-service training.
- 1.1.3 Teachers' organisations themselves have an important role in promoting and providing continuing professional development for teachers and their members.
- 1.1.4 Engagement with teachers' organisations is critical to relevant pre-service and in-service professional development.
- 1.1.5 There are benefits to be derived from the development of opportunities for teacher exchange between Commonwealth countries which are based upon the principle of enhancing the professional development of all the teachers concerned.
- 1.1.6 Increased and inappropriate use of para-teachers undermines quality education and the status of teachers.

### **1.2 PROPOSALS**

- 1.2.1 Governments, in consultation with teachers' organisations, should agree a commonly understood definition of 'professionalism' appropriate to local circumstances.
- 1.2.2 The Commonwealth Secretariat should consider recommending an appropriate percentage of Gross Domestic Product, within education budgets, as a target for teacher professional development expenditure.

- 1.2.3 Governments should develop a coordinated and planned strategy for teachers' professional development and allocate funding to implement such a strategy. Strategies should be subject to processes of evaluation and regular monitoring in order to ensure their effectiveness.
- 1.2.4 Governments should fund and allocate budgets for both pre-service and in-service professional development in terms of educational needs.
- 1.2.5 Teachers should have access to school based professional development.
- 1.2.6 Teachers should have equitable access to quality in-service professional development irrespective of location/remoteness.
- 1.2.7 As part of a strategy to address HIV/AIDS, professional development should include training on
  - sexuality;
  - gender relations; and
  - sex and health education.
- 1.2.8 Professional development should also be available to school administrators, managers, leaders and support staff
- 1.2.9 Governments must engage with teachers' organisations in the design and development of pre-service and in-service professional development.
- 1.2.10 Teachers should be entitled to quality in-service professional development as part of negotiated conditions of employment.
- 1.2.11 Continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, which can be accredited, should be developed.
- 1.2.12 Teacher trainers need to work more closely with practising teachers. Teacher trainers themselves have professional development needs which should be identified and addressed.
- 1.2.13 Professional development opportunities should be made available to teachers who act as mentors to trainee teachers.
- 1.2.14 Where para-teachers are employed as an emergency measure, they must be supported and provided with the means to obtain formal training.
- 1.2.15 The Commonwealth Teachers' Grouping should undertake the task of coordinating professional development activities for teachers in the Commonwealth which lead to mutual benefit. Such an approach would

be based on the principles of partnership and inclusion of all teachers and relevant bodies.

- 1.2.16 Governments should develop and promote a coherent, life skills based, long term and systematic approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Such an approach would give teachers pedagogical tools, life skills and an accurate knowledge of HIV/AIDS to enable them to provide life-saving information to young people.
- 1.2.17 It is recognised that, while in some countries in-service professional development is being provided by donors and other providers, there needs to be a specific budget of the state allocated on top of the donation.
- 1.2.18 Governments should develop quality standards, in consultation with teachers' organisations, for quality pre-service training.

## **2. THEME 2: ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS**

### **2.1 Key Points**

2.1.1 The Teachers' Forum noted that:

- in the global context, there are estimated to be about 54 million teachers worldwide, about half of whom – 27 million – work in the primary sector. Collectively, they teach 1.2 billion pupils worldwide. Yet around 80 million children do not yet attend school, and over 200 million are engaged in child labour;
- the challenges apparent in achieving UPE are compounded further by the fact that 6.5 per cent of all teachers leave the profession per annum, and that in some Commonwealth countries the loss of teachers is exacerbated further by the impact of HIV/AIDS; and
- there is a need to recognise teachers for their commitment, experience and good performance.

2.1.2 The factors that impact on recruitment and retention of teachers include:

- security of tenure;
- pay and conditions of service;
- workload;
- access to adequate housing;
- access to suitable and adequate resources for teachers;

- the impact of class size; and
  - a conducive, healthy and safe working and learning environment.
- 2.1.3 Quality, equitable professional development acts as an incentive to teacher commitment and retention.
- 2.1.4 Career pathways for teachers, other than those which lead to undertaking more administrative roles, will assist in retaining effective classroom teachers.
- 2.1.5 Substandard living conditions affect the attraction and retention of teachers most adversely.
- 2.1.6 Forward planning to meet teacher supply/demand shifts is essential to guarantee stability over the long term.

## 2.2 PROPOSALS

- 2.2.1 Governments should implement the key features of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol on teacher migration in both *source* and *recruiting* countries.
- 2.2.2 There is a need for incentives for teachers to move to rural or remote areas. Such incentives can include housing provision and enhanced continuing professional development opportunities.
- 2.2.3 Governments should improve and strengthen the status of teachers.
- 2.2.4 Teachers' salaries should be commensurate with those of other valued professionals.
- 2.2.5 Governments should commit to negotiating constructively with teachers' organisations to address these issues, through the establishment, where they do not exist, of institutional structures of collective bargaining.

## 3 THEME 3 ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATOR INDICATORS ON EFA GOALS

### 3.1 KEY POINTS

- 3.1.1 Early Childhood Education and Development needs to be both expanded and improved, and should be targeted to address in particular the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- 3.1.2 Strategies to achieve free statutory Universal Primary Education for girls by 2015 must take into account those who face difficult circumstances, have special needs, or who are from minority ethnic communities.

- 3.1.3 Adult Basic Education and Training needs to be appropriate to circumstances and should include life skills programmes. Provision should be made to ensure the employment of full time teachers for adult learning.
- 3.1.4 Sufficient and appropriate professional development linked to EFA goals will assist in achieving these goals.
- 3.1.5 HIV/AIDS impacts disproportionately on the education of girls in meeting the goal for Universal Primary Education.

## 3.2 PROPOSALS

- 3.2.1 Governments should ensure that initiatives to address EFA build upon effective strategies and good practice adopted in similar countries.
- 3.2.2 An evaluation of the Fast Track Initiative needs to be undertaken and regular monitoring of its effects should take place thereafter, particularly in relation to its possible negative impact on teachers' salaries and conditions and teacher supply. The lessons learned from this monitoring and evaluation should be heeded and implemented. Governments should undertake to collect data on the progress of issues related to teachers and to make this information publicly available.
- 3.2.3 A robust regulatory framework should be established for Early Childhood Education and Development. for ages 3-6. Governments should fully fund Early Childhood Education and Development provision.
- 3.2.4 Support services at schools should be established, or where in existence, expanded, for example in relation to social services, counselling and other such provision.
- 3.2.5 The attendance and achievement of boys, or girls, according to region, at schools should be improved. This may require specific action by, for example, social services providers.
- 3.2.6 Distance education programmes should be strengthened where they are able to contribute to meeting the EFA goals.
- 3.2.7 Support staff should be employed to enable teachers to focus on their core function of teaching.
- 3.2.8 Coordination and monitoring of progress towards EFA goals at country level should be strengthened.

Finally, the Teachers' Forum has engaged in detailed and in-depth discussion related to the 16<sup>th</sup> CCEM theme: Access to Quality Education: For the Good of All.

The Teachers' Forum proposes to Ministers that the Teachers' Forum should be a permanent feature of CCEM.

Adopted by The Teachers' Forum at the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers

13<sup>th</sup> December 2006

Cape Town, South Africa

**16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers  
10 – 14, December 2006  
Cape Town, South Africa**

**Statement of the Youth Forum**

**Preamble**

We, the young people of the Commonwealth present this statement to the Commonwealth Education Ministers at their 16<sup>th</sup> Conference in Cape Town, December 2006, for their consideration, endorsement and implementation.

This youth forum reaffirms that education is a right and not a privilege and should therefore be available and affordable to all. We further reaffirm the resolutions made by the 15 CCEM youth delegates and regret to note the limited progress made in implementation of the same.

We acknowledge quality education as an imperative and should target personal development and provide options for sustainable livelihoods.

We therefore urge Commonwealth nations to reaffirm their commitment to democratic principles and place stronger emphasis on providing quality education for all. This entails a collaborative approach to create an environment that promotes understanding and appreciation of diversity.

**Access to Education**

We believe that Universal Primary Education (UPE) is still a necessary goal and regret to note that many of the Commonwealth countries have failed to get equal numbers of boys as girls into primary and secondary education by 2005. Whilst policies are in place and some resources have been set aside for this purpose, we note that implementation and monitoring remains inadequate. We strongly urge member nations to take immediate action to increase the actual number of learners enrolling in primary education; ensure that the infrastructure exists to facilitate learner retention and provision of a safe environment for learners.

We further note the impact of poverty on UPE through cost barriers to access education and being able to remain in school. We acknowledge that there are specific gendered barriers to education that need to be addressed. We also note that these barriers on the whole are different for male and female learners and are often embedded in community attitudes or culture.



There are also barriers that concern the practical aspects of learning. These include negative attitudes by learners towards education; peer pressure; health; student and teacher support and learning environment; lack of relevance of curriculum to learner and alternative education methods such as informal and community based learning.

The youth forum expressed profound concern for the declining image of the teaching profession and demand urgent actions to redeem the situation. We reaffirm our full support for the quest for improved terms and conditions of service for the teaching profession and believe that quality teachers result in quality education.

### **Improving the quality of Education**

Quality education requires a holistic approach in which learner, teacher and parents support is a key aspect. Financial, moral and psychological support as well as community involvement is equally important to successful learning. In addition, education curricula must address pressing social and health issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health as well as drug dependency to equip learners with essential skills.

Young people must take the lead in knowledge and skills transfer within their communities consistent with the “each one, teach one” concept. This can be done by working together with NGOs, community organisations and relevant government departments and in their individual capacity.

We urge commonwealth governments to ensure continuous human resource development and skills upgrading as well as adequate resource allocation to the education sector for achieving and maintaining set standards of both formal and informal education

### **Education for the Good of All**

The youth forum of the 16CCEM notes that there are still large disparities in access to quality education. The participation of disadvantaged groups such as the girl child, persons with disability persons and other vulnerable groups still remains low across the Commonwealth. In addition, we note that some of these disparities have been aggravated by the lack of appreciation of diversity, and failure to fully embrace relevant social and cultural values. We urge all stakeholders to recognise, enhance and promote different forms of interventions that promote development of personal talent and social cohesion.

Furthermore, there is need to strengthen collaboration between the public, private and voluntary education sectors. Quality assurance measures should also be put in place to standardize education provision.

### **Recommendations**

The 16 CCEM youth forum recommends to the Commonwealth Education ministers:

### ***Governments:***

- Prioritise education through a higher budgetary allocation and set up a system of monitoring and evaluation for these funds.
- Place a higher value on the teaching profession including the provision of competitive salaries, conducive environment, and periodic upgrading of skills.
- To increase ICT usage in schools and comprehensive training of teachers.
- Pass legislation that makes primary and secondary education free and compulsory.
- Promote the advantages of alternative types of education that are not formally structured, and offer incentives that attract competent teachers to these programmes.
- Formulate specific objectives to eradicate inequities in education.
- Promote peer education in schools and communities in order to reach those that have not yet been reached by education and equally to uphold the principle of EACH ONE TEACH ONE!
- Include education about social identity, human rights and the impact of discrimination in primary and secondary school curriculum with a view raising understanding about the diversity of social identity and the impact of stigma and discrimination.
- Develop mechanisms to mentor and support students at risk of leaving school because of social identity discrimination.
- Develop policies to promoting female empowerment and gender sensitive pedagogy.
- Private sector participation needs to be monitored and evaluated by the state where necessary through legislative framework, so as to guard against the over commercialisation of education

### ***Partners***

- Increase aid and cooperation partnerships between neighboring commonwealth countries to assist with removing barriers to education, gender inequities within education, and implementing universal primary education for all.
- Encourage the Private sector to contribute positively to education both from a resource perspective and also to provide market perspective in the employability of graduates.
- Community based education programmes be developed to sensitize the community on the problems of gender disparities within education.

### **Commonwealth**

- Commonwealth to facilitate the review of institutional frameworks of the education sector to evaluate and address emerging challenges in education relating to technology, gender, funding, alternative or open education systems.
- Commonwealth to document examples of good practice in education in Commonwealth countries.

**Finally,**

Young people need to work together with established NGOs and the government to ensure that these recommendations are being considered, taken seriously and are being implemented. We acknowledge our own role in breaking down barriers, particularly those regarding attitudes and understanding of other social identities. We pledge to continue to fight against these barriers in our own countries.

**Conclusion**

As youth of the Commonwealth, we call on governments and heads of state to affirm their commitment to eliminating all barriers to education that result in millions of female learners not accessing quality education. We advocate that we be accorded full participation in planning and decision-making processes as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the above recommendations.