

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)

**14TH CONFERENCE OF
COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS**

Report of the Canadian Delegation

**Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
November 26-30, 2000**

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Planning and Organization	2
Conference Planning Teams	
Communications and Marketing Initiatives	
Partners and Funding Sources	
Canadian Delegation	3
Objectives of the Canadian Delegation	4
Ministerial Conference: Key Summary Points	5
Senior Officials Meeting, November 26, 2000	
Opening Ceremony of the Conference	
Ministerial Plenary Sessions	
Ministerial Committee Sessions	
Parallel Symposium	7
Trade Fair	7
Recommendations for Future Action	7
Appendix 1 Ministerial Committee Sessions: Brief Summaries	8
Appendix 2 Parallel Conference: Summary Report	13
Appendix 3 Case Studies	27
Appendix 4 Communiqué	29
Appendix 5 Halifax Statement	37
Appendix 6 Pre-Conference Meeting in Newfoundland: Summary Report	41

REPORT OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION
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INTRODUCTION

The 14th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada from November 26-30, 2000. Delegations from 45 Commonwealth countries convened to engage in discussion on the main theme “*Education in a Global Era: Challenges to Equity, Opportunities for Diversity*” and five sub-themes of accessibility, social and economic development, enhancing cultural integrity, strengthening quality and promoting mobility. Each member country was requested to report to the Conference on the theme. The Canadian report is titled “Education in a Global Era: Developments in Education in Canada” and is available from the CMEC Secretariat or at www.cmec.ca/international/publications. The major outcome of the Conference is the Halifax Statement, which delineates the Commonwealth vision and guiding principles for education. Building on previous work, the Halifax Statement identifies priority areas for activity to intensify joint action and collaborative work by Commonwealth countries and agencies in education.

Notably the 14th CCEM engaged the largest number of Commonwealth countries since its inception in 1959. Approximately 800 participants were involved in three components of the CCEM. The three components included the ministerial conference, a parallel international symposium featuring both government and non-governmental organizations, and an exhibition/trade fair. Approximately 400 dignitaries, academics, researchers and representatives from various educational milieus from Canada and several Commonwealth countries participated in the parallel symposium and trade fair.

Joint sessions with the ministerial delegations and participants from the parallel conference were included in the conference agenda to encourage broad discussion focusing on the challenges that confront education and human resource development in the new millennium. While not included in the main body of the Canadian delegation report, a brief summary of the parallel conference is attached in Appendix 2.

The Report of the Canadian delegation includes a general overview of the conference themes and specific information on Canada’s formal interventions. In addition, a promotional pre-conference event in St. John’s, Newfoundland was attended by 20 delegates representing 8 Commonwealth countries. Appendix 6 contains a summary report provided by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

Conference Planning Teams

Two working groups were established to plan the activities of the Ministers' Conference, parallel symposium and exhibition/trade fair. The Commonwealth Secretariat, based in London, England, chaired the ministerial planning group, and Nova Scotia Department of Education chaired the planning group for the parallel events. The Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) was represented on both working groups. Other representatives for the ministerial planning group included the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Human Resources Development Canada.

For the parallel activities, the same groups were represented, with the addition of the Commonwealth of Learning, the British Council, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and Industry Canada.

Communications and Marketing Initiatives

Extensive communication using a variety of mechanisms were engaged to ensure high participation by Commonwealth countries and the parallel events. A Web site was developed for the conference, symposium and trade fair by Nova Scotia at the following address:

<http://www.14ccem.com>

Applications for exhibition space were solicited from the private sector, NGOs, educational institutions, developmental agencies and ministries within the Commonwealth. To ensure an equitable pan-Commonwealth spread of exhibitors, Canada was designated 25% of the total available space. Due to the low numbers of exhibitors from less well developed countries, Canada assumed approximately 50% of the available space.

The CMEC Secretariat also worked with provincial and territorial governments to develop a "Gateway to Canadian Education" Web site as an entry point to information on Canadian educational programs, services and expertise. The site entitled Education@Canada / Éducation@Canada is being targeted primarily to non-Canadians, and draws together existing Internet resources from across various government and organizational Web sites. It is a tangible manifestation of accessible information, a global window on sources for solutions to education-related issues, and an example of pan-Canadian cooperation in promoting the education sector.

A Communiqué was issued by the Commonwealth Secretariat at the end of the Conference and is included as Appendix 3. Media were also permitted to be present during the Ministerial plenary sessions.

Partners and Funding Sources

The Ministers' Conference was financially supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), and the Province of Nova Scotia. The symposium and trade fair was supported by the Province of Nova Scotia, Industry Canada, the British Council, the Commonwealth of Learning and by private sector sponsors including Knowledge House, Intel, IBM, MTT, Cisco, Lexmark, Times Higher Education, and Kensington Publications Limited. In addition, CIDA provided a grant to CMEC to support the participation of 17 individuals at the symposium.

CANADIAN DELEGATION

The Honourable Glenn Hagel, Minister of Post-secondary Education and Skills Training in Saskatchewan and Chair of the CMEC, was initially head of the Canadian delegation until he was elected to preside as Chair of the 14th CCEM. After the election, the Deputy Head of the delegation, the Honourable Jane Purves, Minister of Education for Nova Scotia, the host province, became head of the delegation. The Honourable Lyle Oberg, Minister of Learning for Alberta, assumed the role of Deputy Head.

Canadian Delegation

Nominated Chair of 14th CCEM: Honourable Glenn Hagel, Saskatchewan

Head of Delegation: Honourable Jane Purves, Nova Scotia

Deputy Head of Delegation: Honourable Lyle Oberg, AB

Honourable Judy Foote, Newfoundland

Honourable Jeffrey Lantz, Prince Edward Island

Honourable Peter Kilabuk, Nunavut

Maria David-Evans, Alberta

Paul Cappon, CMEC Secretariat

Alan Bowker, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Thomas Townsend, Human Resources Development Canada

Jean-Marc Métivier, Canadian International Development Agency

Gerald Brown, Association of Canadian Community Colleges

Robert Giroux, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

Marilies Rettig, Canadian Teachers Federation

Resource Persons/Observers

Benjamin Levin, Manitoba

Catherine Gogan, Newfoundland

Suzanne Herbert, Ontario

George Molloy, CMEC Secretariat

Boyd Pelley, CMEC Secretariat

Sheila Molloy, CMEC Secretariat

Tom Rich, Nova Scotia

Shannon Delbridge, Nova Scotia

Gerald Galway, Newfoundland

Rachel Bard, New Brunswick

Jean-Marc Peter, Québec

Louis Lizotte, Ontario

Brian Keith, Saskatchewan

Nick Rubidge, British Columbia

Richard Martin, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Donna Troop, Human Resources Development Canada

Melanie Alton, Canadian International Development Agency

Marylin Blaeser, Canadian International Development Agency

Harvey Wiener, Canadian Teachers Federation

OBJECTIVES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

The objectives of the Canadian delegation at the 14th 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 Halifax Statement and work towards an improved final text
- support Canada's foreign policy with respect to the Commonwealth, in particular support for the Commonwealth of Learning
- highlight Canada's position as a leader in education
- identify possible alliances among countries in the event of contentious issues, and
- consider appropriate follow-up in Canada regarding the outcomes of the Conference.

The role of delegation members and other participants 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 participate, and noting country alliances, and
- preparing and bringing to the daily meetings advice, having taken into consideration to objectives of the delegation, the contents of the Canadian delegation report, and Canadian comments on the Halifax Statement.

A planning group was formed to prepare the agendas for each day's delegation meetings, look after technical details, and to assist the head of the delegation. The Canadian delegation met each morning to review the previous day's outcomes, discuss observations, and address any issues prior to the first conference session of the day.

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE: KEY SUMMARY POINTS

Senior Officials Meeting, November 26, 2000

- Maria David-Evans represented Canadian authorities at the Senior Officials meeting. She welcomed delegates to the 14th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers and noted Canada's pleasure in hosting Conference for the first time since 1964.
- Senior officials commended the Education Department of the Commonwealth Secretariat for the excellent work reflected in the draft Halifax Statement and for the extensive consultation process used to build the consensus document.
- Halifax Statement: Formal Intervention by Canada

Second paragraph, First Principle

- a. recommended changing the order of the sentences and beginning the paragraph with a new sentence "*We believe in the right of everyone to education.*"
- b. recommended broadening the paragraph to focus on the goal of lifelong learning allowing countries to focus on their specific priority areas of education; specifically, adding the sentence "*Higher education and research are among the important tools through which countries can achieve their goals.*"

Fifth Principle, Action B

- a. recommended the establishment of a working group on Qualifications, Equivalencies and Standards as a forum for dialogue rather than just working with standards.

The above Canadian interventions were accepted.

- Commonwealth of Learning: Formal Intervention by Canada
 1. Canada reiterated its pride in hosting COL in British Columbia and provided support for the COL strategic plan. Canada indicated its continued financial support and commended COL for its efforts to maintain high standards and integrity.
- CHOGM Committee on Cooperation through Sport
 1. Canada asked that the statement be broadened recognizing the importance of physical education and the benefits of participation. A more general statement would be easier for all countries to support.

Opening Ceremony of the Conference

The Platform Party for the Opening Ceremony for the Ministerial Conference and Parallel Event included, among others, the Right Honourable Donald McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary General; the Honourable Gildas Molgat, Speaker of the Senate of Canada; Lieutenant Governor Myra Freeman and the Honourable John Hamm, Premier of Nova Scotia.

Ministerial Plenary Sessions

- Joint Opening Plenary: Delegates of the Ministers Conference and Parallel Events were welcomed by the Honourable Jane Purves. The First Lady of Uganda, Janet Musaveni, delivered the speech focusing on the opportunities and challenges of globalization, the use of education as a primary tool to move the country of Uganda toward independence following colonization, and the need to balance national unity and tradition with the new forces in the future of education.
- First Ministerial Plenary Session: The Honourable Glenn Hagel was elected to preside as Chair over the 14th Conference and the agenda was approved.
- Second Ministerial Plenary Session:
Formal Intervention by Canada - a general comment noted the important role of professional development in preparing teachers to deliver the school curriculum
- Third Ministerial Plenary Session: Commonwealth of Learning
Formal Intervention by Canada -

“The Canadian Government is committed to the Commonwealth of Learning. This unique Commonwealth Institution is at the cutting edge in terms of its capability of enhancing peoples’ access to quality education by the use of the full range of distance education tools available.

Canada congratulates the COL on its many achievements and supports it plans. There are many needs and opportunities.

The Canadian contribution, which has been essential to the success of COL, is \$1.1M per year from the Government of Canada and \$350,000 for special projects from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. This funding will continue as in the past. In addition, the Province of British Columbia also supports COL, which as you know is located in Vancouver. I am pleased to announce the Province of British Columbia’s re-commitment to the Commonwealth of Learning and confirmation of its contribution of \$1 million, also on the same terms as its past support.

Our substantial level of funding over the years reflects Canada’s conviction that COL will be a vital contribution in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. COL has proven its worth and it is now our hope to broaden the base of its support.

Canada also supports the efforts made by COL to diversify its support by pursuing such avenues as fee-for-service arrangements beyond those provided by member governments.”

- Third Ministerial Plenary Session: Halifax Statement
Formal Interventions by Canada -
 1. Principle #4: after the phrase ... the Commonwealth Institute, proposed adding “Commonwealth scholarships” and added the following third sentence “Inherent in this belief is the value of academic interchange as well as student and knowledge mobility.”
 2. Action 5b, added “student and knowledge mobility” in the first sentence.

The Halifax Statement (see Appendix 4) will now be forwarded to the High Level Review Group tasked to examine the future of the Commonwealth.

Ministerial Committee Sessions

One or more members of the Canadian delegation, support staff and/or observers attended each of 12 Ministerial Committee Sessions. Brief summaries of each committee session are provided in Appendix 1. Detailed summaries of the Ministerial Committee Sessions have been prepared by their respective chairs and are available at the CMEC Secretariat.

PARALLEL SYMPOSIUM

The Parallel Symposium featured four plenary sessions and a Ministers' Forum with a panel representing the CCEM. There were also two sets of break-out sessions focusing on the theme and 24 concurrent sessions with a number of Canadians prominently featured. A case study on Canadian solutions was coordinated by the CMEC and featured speakers from the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. **A summary of the Case Studies is attached as Appendix 3.**

TRADE FAIR

The Trade Fair, "*Shopping for Solutions*" provided an opportunity for Commonwealth countries to showcase a range of systems, packages, projects and approaches, from traditional to technology-based, that offer proven solutions to many of the challenges facing education.

The CMEC Secretariat orchestrated a cooperative venture among the federal government, provincial governments, non-governmental sector, institutions and the private sector to create a "Canadian Village" at the Trade Fair. The Canadian Village, with representation from more than 50 organizations, provided an opportunity to highlight a sample of Canadian approaches and solutions relating to the issues being discussed by Education Ministers.

APPENDIX 1

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE SESSIONS Brief Summaries from the Canadian Perspective

Ministerial Committee Session No. 1

Committee A (Chair: Maldives)

Social and Economic Development

The participants had a lively discussion around the critical role that education must play in the social and economic development of a nation. Statements were made that enforced the notion that education and training must be a key component to any nation and strategic actions plans. Discussion also included the need for caution around the potential negative impact of information technology and development aid programs on the loss of a nation's identity and culture.

Key discussion points noted education's role in achieving and effectively managing pluralism in society as a pre-requisite to maximizing social and economic development. Information and technology, though very important for social and economic development by itself, was insufficient and the need to maintain a balance between knowledge sector of ICT and creativity and innovation of education systems was recognized as vital to sustain and improve communities' quality of life.

The Committee recognized that the special needs of small states needed to be addressed as these countries often lacked the human and other resources required to compete in a globalized world. The growing gap between the beneficiaries of globalization and those marginalized by the process was a source of concern. The role of schools being recognized was of great importance, but would be maximized only through the effective training of teachers, as well as the provision of appropriate learning resources.

Committee B (Chair: South Africa)

Enhancing Cultural Identity

The participants discussed the definition and preservation of cultural identity, the incorporation of minority values and the challenges facing nations from cultural globalization. The Nunavut Minister of Education, the Honourable Peter Kilabuk, noted that the government of Nunavut is strongly committed to preserving Inuit cultural identity. He outlined the measures that had been taken to ensure the use of Inuktitut in government and schools, and to encourage interaction between children and elders who can impart traditional knowledge to them.

Participants agreed that the education system is an essential tool for teaching tolerance about different cultures, and minority views, and there is a need for appropriate teaching materials and training for teachers. While nations need to identify common values, it is important also for cultural differences to be recognized. Cultural globalization, through the media and ICT, can undermine national cultural identity and strategies may be required to protect indigenous culture and values.

Committee C (Chair: Solomon Islands) ***New Directions in Financing and Management of Education***

In the face of the rising costs of education and scarce resources, many countries are looking at cost-sharing and the involvement of the private sector. While most countries recognize that primary education should be free, some look at cost-sharing at the secondary level. Most countries have cost-sharing at the post-secondary level despite assertions that education is a right and therefore should be free at this level as well.

Most countries agree that society should be educated on the costs of education. Those who can afford it should contribute to some degree. Caution was raised to ensure that low income students are not denied access to education as a result of cost-sharing initiatives. Decentralization was a common theme in relation to management of education.

Committee D (Chair: Bahamas) ***Strengthening Quality and Promoting Mobility***

A distinction was made between knowledge mobility and human mobility. There was concern that with increased human mobility, more of the best, brightest, and more affluent students and teachers in less developed countries will leave for advanced education in more highly developed countries. Increased mobility also raises questions about quality. As on-line and offshore educational institutions become more prevalent, accreditation and quality control will be increasingly important.

Ministerial Committee Session No. 2

Committee E (Chair: Kenya) ***Access, Equity and Mobility***

Much of the discussion focused on issues of gender equity, the marginalization of boys in many countries, and access of women to senior decision making positions. Cultural contexts and societal attitudes were noted as major factors in gender issues. Creating relevant learning materials could support a change in public attitudes and beliefs. Teacher education and continuing professional development were also noted as key. Learning about the experiences of other Commonwealth countries with quality monitoring, accreditation, and quality improvement would be helpful.

Committee F (Chair: Sri Lanka) ***Quality and Sustainability***

While it was difficult to define quality, it was agreed that quality includes relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. It was recommended that performance indicators and benchmarks be developed to evaluate learning outcomes. A number of strategies were recommended to achieve quality, including the creation of centralized curriculum, and standards and assessment balanced with decentralized implementation and delivery to meet local needs. The importance of teacher education was highlighted as well as the need to establish mechanisms to achieve quality pre-service and in-service

teacher education. The value of appropriate partnerships between the school and local community were also noted. Greater opportunities for information sharing and learning from each other through the exchange and dissemination of information was noted as a comparative advantage of the Commonwealth.

Committee G (Chair: The Gambia)

Capacity Building and Capacity Utilization

After the introductory presentation on data collection and statistics, and its importance in education planning and evaluation, the participants spent some time expanding on that topic, and highlighting some of the challenges they face in their own countries regarding accuracy of data, national ownership of the data, problems of politicization of data, and capacity to analyze it effectively.

The core topic of capacity building and capacity utilization was approached by speakers mostly as a description of the challenges they faced such as teacher “brain drain”, lack of access to technologies to support national teacher training (digital divide), and the lure of global culture which detracted from knowledge of local cultural values. Solutions may be developed through continued cooperation with the existing Commonwealth institutions. A list of “recommendations” was proposed by the Chair for presentation to the plenary.

Committee H (Chair: Zambia)

HIV/AIDS, Health and Education

Discussion focused primarily on the daunting challenges facing Commonwealth nations in coping with the AIDS pandemic, particularly those from sub-Saharan Africa which has the highest incidence in the world. Participants identified a number of areas which needed to be addressed, including the continuation of prejudice and discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS; significantly higher incidence of HIV/AIDS among girls and women, which is a reflection of their greater vulnerability both economically and as a result of cultural norms; the effect on the education system of teachers dying with AIDS and of absenteeism of both teachers and students to attend funerals or to care for ailing relatives.

The growing problem of AIDS orphans was also identified as well as the difficulties of providing AIDS education to marginalized groups and people who are illiterate. It was recognized that only significant behavioural change will bring down the incidence of infection. In this, the education system must play a major role, and imaginative strategies devised to address cultural barriers and sensitize teachers to their crucial role.

Ministerial Committee Session No. 3

Committee I (Chair: Canada - Dr. Lyle Oberg)

***Qualifications, Standards and Equivalencies,
Scholarships, Fellowships and Exchanges***

The Committee noted that rapid developments in transmittal provisions and e-learning, as well as

increased mobility of both knowledge and students, are raising a number of difficult issues. The following critical issues were highlighted:

- serious concern with the quality of the education offered by many providers,
- identification and verification of academic standards,
- credit recognition and mobility of qualifications, and;
- the protection of vulnerable students or potential students.

An important role for the Commonwealth could involve the development of guidelines and networking among institutions already active in this area.

Relating to scholarships and mobility, the Committee heard a presentation from the UK Commonwealth Scholarship Commission outlining recent experience with the Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships Plan. The Committee then recommended an amendment to paragraph F of the Halifax Statement.

Committee J (Chair: Seychelles)

Small States Priorities and Resources for Learning

Ministers focused their discussion on small states' priorities and resources for learning, and how these relate to the Halifax Statement and Action Plan. After a lively discussion, Ministers endorsed the recommendations of the Seychelles Meeting of Spring 2000 on the Commonwealth contribution to the issue of Education and Human Development in Small States, and endorsed the reference to the Small States in the last sentence of the second paragraph of the Halifax Statement. The Committee also recommended the following changes:

- the second paragraph of the Halifax Statement be amended as follows (changes in bold): "We are deeply concerned that in the contemporary world more than 110 million school-age children, **of which two-thirds are girls**, do not have access to education, and over 800 million adults, **of which 60% are women**, remain illiterate."
- an amendment to item 5-A of the Action Plan to include a reference to the establishment, in collaboration with COL and on the basis of existing resources, of the Virtual University of the Small States; and
- an amendment to the item 5-B of the Action Plan as follows (in bold): "The Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with other bodies and the private sector should explore ways of enhancing access to quality teaching/learning materials at affordable prices for schools, **adult literacy programs** and universities in Commonwealth countries."

Proposed modifications have no direct repercussions for Canada; however, several references to COL and its involvement in the implementation of the new proposals and the overall access to educational materials in small states were made.

Committee K (Chair: New Zealand)

*Values Education and Citizenship, Early
Childhood Education*

- notes to come

Committee L (Chair: Zambia)

*Coping with HIV/AIDS in Education, Education in
Difficult Circumstances*

Discussion focused on various interventions and strategies to cope with children traumatized by war. Strategies included promoting music and games in schools and communities, providing counseling for teachers and students, introducing shorter classes, multi grade teaching and shorter teacher training, and including peace education and a culture of peace in the curriculum.

It was noted that, particularly during civil disturbances, education systems must make a greater effort to function, serving as a locus or zone of peace and safety, free of political strife. It was recognized that schools become targets, and there is greater danger that schools can be abused through political strife. As such, teachers and experts often choose to seek opportunities to work outside of these environments. Strategies must include mechanisms for encouraging those who have migrated to urban areas to return to rural areas.

Many African countries shared their experiences emerging from conflict and civil strife. The Ministers expressed concern for the protection of children, building of societies, violence affecting girls and women, and the need for better training for the armed forces with respect to professionalism and peacekeeping. It was noted that the Halifax Statement should separate the HIV/AIDS issue from the category entitled “difficult circumstances”. In addition, the Halifax statement needs to be strengthened to address gender issues.

APPENDIX 2

PARALLEL CONFERENCE - SUMMARY REPORT

Draft Report of the 14CCEM Parallel Symposium

Executive Summary

November 29, 2000

One of the most telling comments of the various discussions that took place was the point that the Commonwealth must see their future actions in education as part of the Dakar deliberations and the Framework for Action of the Education for All forum. The tensions that exist between the various bodies involved with the follow-up must be addressed in a positive manner. The participants encourage UNESCO to take its role in a responsible and energetic manner since UNESCO has been designate the lead agency for the follow-up and it must ensure full cooperation and participation of all organization and groups involved in the process.

EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

Education benefits so many people in society beyond the person who is educated that it is difficult to think of it as a private good.

Education as a public good centres around the notion of education for citizenship. We need to determine the skill sets and attributes necessary for people to participate as citizens in governance.

CREATING WAYS OF IMPROVING ACCESS, OPPORTUNITY AND QUALITY

Access, opportunity and quality is important because of the growing gap between those who access to education and those who do not.

Examples were cited where governments are setting ambitious participation targets for access, providing financial incentives for schools, engaging in affirmative action programs, and modifying entrance requirements to improve access to certain groups.

The cost of overseas education has very deleterious effects on movement of students between countries - and failure to be able to access overseas education also has the added, if unintended, effect of widening disparities between nations.

The suggestion was made that more wealthy Commonwealth countries should give special consideration to students from less wealthy Commonwealth countries as a way of helping to deal with this disparity in access to higher education.

FINANCING AND MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION – *Affordable, equitable, excellence*

Education ministers have to obtain adequate resources for their programs within domestic budgets in competition with many other competing programs. This requires convincing the treasury and political colleagues that the money is needed and will be well spent.

Where education spending is a devolved responsibility, national leaders may need to convince local leader to give education the priority it deserves.

The contribution of private finance also needs to be maximized within the political constraints of each country and in a way that is consistent with achieving their overall education goals - especially in regard to equity and access.

Tuition fees in many countries are seen as a poor alternative to additional public provision. On the other hand if government is unable or unwilling to raise taxes or sacrifice other spending to make higher spending on education possible then tuition fees are likely to be necessary if quality and size objective are to be achieved.

Tuition fees raise a number of issues—if tuition fees are to be introduced, then scholarship or waivers for student for poorer families who would be unable to pay need to be introduced. These are difficult to design and implement.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is the biggest obstacle facing education, lowering demand, lowering supply, and impacting on quality. Education should focus on the “*window of hope.*”

Solutions proposed include ensuring that education inculcates life skills education focusing on human sexuality. In addition, damage presentation must be emphasized by focusing on the “window of hope,” the primary school age, through multi channels such as the curriculum, newsletters, peer counseling etc.

GENDER AND EQUITY ISSUES

Several practical examples of addressing gender and equity concerns were given during the conference.

Managing diversity and ensuring that public institutions reflect the diverse nature of society requires ensuring equitable, accessible and inclusive education.

Programs need to address under-representation, provide role models in the public school system and improve the quality of the learning environment, give the under-represented voice in school boards, provide learning resources that promote understanding of their history and cultural heritage.

THE INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION

The 1990s witnessed major changes in the scope and reach of information infrastructure, mostly, in industrialized countries. The dramatic expansion of the Internet and World Wide Web (www) as well as rapid deployment of wireless network are most visible hallmarks of the “networking revolution.” The forces of technological advance and competition are driving the infrastructure at dizzying speed.

To what extent can knowledge-based solutions help? Bridging the economic divide between industrialized and non-industrialized countries is overwhelmingly a function of continuous learning and knowledge sharing. It is in the exchange of knowledge and experience in the marketplace of ideas

that solutions to problems of development can be created. People need to constantly learn new skills and keep current skills up-to-date. The communication revolution holds out the promise of universal access to sources of knowledge and learning.

ICTs allow for increased access to education through ***distance education***, which can potentially provide low cost higher education, low cost teacher training and cheaper on-line libraries.

ICTs can help ***improve education quality*** through the incorporation of interactive learning tools which could be provide quick and equal access to information, enhance teacher training programs and enable networking among schools in different countries.

ICTs can help to ***strengthen education management*** by providing shared knowledge among policy makers through knowledge management systems, shared databases and real time data/indicators, and evaluation of information projects.

POST SECONDARY ISSUES

Countries recognized that while Universal Primary Education may be a *sine qua non* for both development and democracy, the contributions of post secondary institutions are vital if countries are to develop to their fullest.

There is a need for the Member States of the Commonwealth to ensure that the message gets across that without the participation and the success of universities, developing countries are likely to be excluded from the growth associated with the modern knowledge economy. Without the development of the university system, countries will not be able to contribute to the body of knowledge and research so important to their own and others' advancement.

Report of the CCEM Parallel Symposium

Introduction and Overview:

Education remains a bedrock of the development process. Direct linkages have been repeatedly established between education and social and economic transformation. Consider the evidence: no country has been able to achieve and sustain growth without first reaching a critical threshold in the education of its general population of at least 40% adult literacy. A mother's education is inversely related to fertility and child morbidity—as little as one or two years of schooling for the mother reduces child mortality by about 15. In the East Asia “tigers,” education was the most important predictor of success explaining 38% of the difference in growth compared to 34% attributed to physical capital. Education further increases wage income and productivity and is critical for creating an open democratic society and for enhancing social equity. The symbiotic relationship between education and economic growth is well documented: a growing economy needs education to provide the skills, the ideas and innovation and competitiveness. Similarly, education needs a growing economy to provide the resources to support it and an expanding labor market to absorb the graduates.

The centrality of education to the development process has been further enhanced by the knowledge based economy. As the 21st century unfolds, access to knowledge is increasingly becoming the most important economic resource, vital for competitiveness of individuals, enterprises and nations. For individuals, education is the key to accessing adapting and creating knowledge. Basic education increases people's capacity to learn and to interpret information. Higher education and technical training are needed to build a labor force that can create the scientific and intellectual leadership to quickly adapt of fast changing technological advances. As our understanding of the development process deepens, consensus is emerging that the two pillars of poverty reduction are investment in people and investment in growth.

At the same time, it is possible to argue that the potency of education stands seriously threatened by a world that is changing at an unprecedented speed, a global economy that turns the world into a village while at the same time threatening to marginalise those unable to participate and compete in it. If education appears not to be living up to its promise, it is not because it is inherently incapable of doing so, on the contrary, the knowledge based economies that we are now in even more than before should enhance this potency. The failure lies more in the ability of the sector to transform itself in order to address basic weaknesses and to adapt flexibly and quickly to fast changing national and international dynamics. This, change and adaptability is the fundamental challenge of our time, but it is a change that can easily be brought about by careful utilization of knowledge based solutions.

The first challenge is to complete the 20th century agenda of access to quality, basic education, an agenda which is incomplete for about ½ of the world's population most of them in South Asia and Africa. Nearly one billion adults are unable to read, and one half of them are women, more than 100 million children between the ages of 6–14 are not in school and of those who go to school 150 million of them drop out before achieving functional literacy. The pace at which we have addressed these basic access and equity problems over the past ten years has been too slow to enable the affected countries to catch up. The essence of the EFA declaration in Dakar earlier this year was that all countries would work together to ensure access to basic education for all children by 2015. It is an important challenge that we cannot afford to lose sight of as we embrace the 21st century challenges.

The second challenge is one of equity and inclusion. For those countries which have achieved basic

access to education for the majority of their population, they face issues of quality of education at all levels and they have concerns about the lack of relevance of the education system to the labor markets and to economic needs. In addition, there remains pockets of unreached populations because of geographic location, ethnicity, or gender. If these people remain unreached, they create a reservoir for intergenerational poverty and social stratification both potential sources of civil unrest.

In the industrialized countries, the challenge is to create a competitive labor force for a fast changing economy. In the USA it has been estimate that a worker will need to change careers at least five times in a lifetime which places heavy demands on the education system to be agile and flexible in order to re-tool and rebuild new skills. It means that education needs to become lifelong and continuous, that the curriculum has to be revised constantly and that the delivery mode has to be adapted to a diverse range of learning needs. A recent article on Thailand highlights this problem which is by no means peculiar to Thailand and is in fact much worse for countries with less well developed education systems.

The critical challenge then is how the education system re-invents itself in order to become more responsive to emerging demands while maintaining a focus on the essence of education. Technology will not replace education, it could enhance its role if well harnessed but if not, it could greatly diminish it.

One of the most telling comments of the various discussions that took place was the point that the Commonwealth must see their future actions in education as part of the Dakar deliberations and the Framework for Action of the Education for All forum. The tensions that exist between the various bodies involved with the follow-up must be addressed in a positive manner. The participants encourage UNESCO to take its role in a responsible and energetic manner since UNESCO has been designated the lead agency for the follow-up and it must ensure full cooperation and participation of all organization and groups involved in the process.

The participants were supportive of the Parallel Event and encourage that future parallel symposia cooperate even more fully with the Ministerial meetings. They encourage more joint meetings between the two.

EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

The first theme was “Education as a Public Good.” Education, as you know, benefits so many people in society beyond the person who is educated that it’s difficult to think of it as a private good.

This assumption leads to a whole host of issues, as arose in the sessions, about the commercialization or commoditization of education, the privatization of education—education as a good for sale, and who should be bearing the cost of education—and for how long? There is a need for creative public-private partnerships.

A related question which was raised as whether or not, in some countries the promotion and adoption of inappropriate technology, or technology in advance of the appropriate infrastructure, puts too great a financial burden on the system.

We learned, too, that even a small fee for education is a deterrent for some families, and effectively excludes some children from participating.

Another aspect of education as a public good centers around the notion of education for citizenship, and mention was made in the sessions of the need to determine the skill sets and attributes necessary for people to participate as citizens in governance. And the need, too, as mentioned in one session, to determine whether education should be re-balanced to encourage the learning of social and attitudinal skills, so as to develop global citizens, and not merely national ones.

Some people saw globalization as a threat—with potential to homogenize our separate cultures. Others saw it as a means of opening up our minds to other ideas, and creating peace and harmony through understanding of other cultures.

On another level, there appear to be some very worthwhile efforts—in places as far apart as Uganda and the Northwest Territories of Canada—to consult with the local community, so the people have some ownership of the curriculum, as well as the delivery of education—efforts to localize education, in order to make it more meaningful and acceptable to communities, particularly more remote ones.

Getting back to education as a public good also raises the question of how much of education is a public good, and what implications the answer has for both accountability and financing.

CREATING WAYS OF CREATING ACCESS, OPPORTUNITY AND QUALITY

One theme which emerged very strongly in the sessions had to do with creating ways of improving access, opportunity and quality.

The reason why this is such an important issue is the growing gap between those who have access to education those who do not.

We learned during the presentation of some examples where governments are setting ambitious participation targets for access, providing financial incentives for school, engaging in affirmative action programs, and modifying entrance requirements to improve access for certain groups.

But the sheer enormity of the accessibility problem, in places such as India—as pointed out in one of the sessions—adds a dimension to the problems in some places that are very difficult for countries with smaller populations to imagine, much less relate to.

Barriers to access can be summarized, in general, as resulting from distance, diversity or disparity—but they can arise, as has been pointed out, from other sources, such as national conflicts. We need to put more emphasis on non-formal education.

Some countries, like South Africa, are trying to shift their conceptualization of students with special needs by exploring the causes of educational breakdown barriers to exclusion such as the traditional ones like socio-economic barriers, but also attributes to education at home, flexible curriculum, and inaccessible or unsafe buildings.

It has been noted, too that accessibility is not a problem only for lower levels of schooling, but due to cost, capacity of limits, or lack of articulation, the ease of movement between various levels of schooling can be adversely affected within countries—and sometimes the lack of equivalencies affecting inter-country movement.

It was also pointed out that the cost of overseas education has very deleterious effects on movement of students between countries—and failure to be able to access overseas education also has the added, if unintended, effect of widening disparities between nations.

FINANCING AND MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION – Affordable, effective, excellence

Two main aspects to financing:

- C How to mobilize adequate financial resources, public and private, needed to achieve education goals.
- C How to achieve best possible outcomes in terms of quality, equity, access, diversity. (It is important to remember that more money does not necessarily mean higher quality.)

Mobilizing resources:

Education ministers have to obtain adequate resources for their programs within domestic budgets in competition with many other competing programs. This requires convincing the treasury and political colleagues that the money is needed and will be well spent. Where education spending is a devolved responsibility, national leaders may need to convince local leaders to give education the priority it deserves.

The contribution of private finance also needs to be maximized within the political constraints of each country and in a way that is consistent with achieving their overall education goals—especially in regard to equity and access. Private finance may be provided by:

- C Charities, churches, or private companies who are education providers.
- C Parents and students paying fees.

Tuition fees in many countries are seen as a poor alternative to additional public provision. On the other hand if government is unable or unwilling to raise taxes or sacrifice other spending to make higher spending on education possible then tuition fees are likely to be necessary if quality and size objectives are to be achieved.

Tuition fees raise a number of issues—if tuition fees are to be introduced, then scholarship or waivers for student for poorer families to who would be unable to pay need to be introduced and these are difficult to design and implement.

Fee paying often leads to a dual education system—with private schools offering higher quality education than predominantly publicly funded schools. Resulting in two tier systems likely to be anti-poor. Answer lies in non-government providers to be given subsidies to enable children of poorer families to attend. Private provision as such need not be anti poor—depends on what financing regime accompanies it. Private providers may also make up for lack of capacity in public system and can sometimes produce efficiencies that are difficult to obtain in a public sector system.

It is interesting to note that the private finance provision is often less controversial in poorer countries—maybe because the possibility of additional public spending is accepted to be problematic and people accept that if they want high quality and greater access they will have to pay something. In wealthier countries there is a long history of predominantly public provision and the hope that governments are able to spend a great deal more on education at all levels. Poorer countries are more willing to experiment with public/private partnerships. But it is important to focus on the issue of equity surrounding private involvement.

Achieving maximum effectiveness - However successful efforts are at mobilizing resources, they will always be finite. So governments and education systems must do everything they can to ensure maximum effectiveness “affordable excellence” should be their watch-word.

- C Be clear on what one is trying to achieve—at national level, local and institutional levels in the system. This includes knowledge and skills as measured in public private or privately managed exams with a national qualifications framework, and targets for overall size and access by socioeconomic.
- C Have in place national or local framework for delivering and monitoring these targets. This might include a National curriculum a national examinations system and publicly available information on the extent to which targets at all levels are being reached.
- C Develop best practices for teaching and learning based on good research and training of teachers.
- C Allocate public resources to schools and colleges in a way that is equitable across the system and maximize the marginal benefits to society of a pound or dollar spent as between each educational level. To maximize effectiveness and efficiency the resources should also be allocated so as to reward success in for example recruitment and quality of provision while at the same time providing special assistance to institutions and pupils that are severely disadvantaged or who need help to deal with past failure.
- C Private finance is good at rewarding success and penalizing failure. Public finance has a special role to play in compensating for market failure—helping disadvantaged or failing institutions; but if it is to play this role there have to be well articulated plans for using the extra money to secure improvement.
- C Develop management systems and methods at institutional level. This might include:
- C Decentralization of budgets and decision making to school and college level within a clear national framework for curriculum, educational targets.
- C New models of management moving away from the traditional bureaucratic model to an academic management model drawing on appropriate lessons from business but also recognizing the need for flexibility and autonomy of teachers and academics.
- C Leadership and managerial training is required.

New Issues in Financing

Face of education is changing in terms of sources of funds, expectation of students and society resulting in changing relationships between public and private institutions. Private sector recognizing the huge market in education especially in education technology and is willing to broker new relationships with the public sector e.g. 60% of the costs of education in Uganda provided by households, the private sector is increasingly involved in provision of inputs such as textbooks or computers, private management of public schools. As government funds decrease, universities seeking new ways to raise funds. E.g. undertaking contracted or sponsored research projects or training programs, providing consultancy expertise, establishing international summer school courses. Parallel degree programs in Kenya and Uganda that charge economic rates to absorb the extra number of students and also generate revenue for the universities.

International aid to education needs to match strong rhetoric on the same. Education needs to emulate the health sector to build mega alliances with the private sector and with external partners e.g. UNAIDs, ONCHO, Communicable disease initiative. Sector wide approached whereby resources from all external partners are pooled are helpful in ensuring consistent allocation and utilization. Resources freed up through debt relief could strategically be claimed and deployed for education and this should substantially increase the funding base to education. (See chart for debt relief). Private

technology firms looking to education for lighter, more usable applications and are currently a willing partner similar to involvement of pharmaceutical companies in the health sector e.g. CISCO, Gates Foundation.

Need to ensure predictability and sustainability of funds - - more focus on long term planning and financial commitment in education (10 years). More ownership of programs by increase community and civil service involvement to also generate solutions to local issues.

HIV/AIDS

For some countries HIV/AIDS is the biggest obstacle facing education, lowering demand, lowering supply, and quality but education focusing on the “*window of hope*” should be undertaken.

HIV/AIDS is projected to reduce life expectancy in several Southern African countries by as much as 17 years, increasing IMRs and generally reversing the economic and social gains of more than three decades. Whereas the epicenter is currently South Africa it is spreading rapidly in Eastern Europe, Asia (India has more than 4 million cases), Caribbean and Indochina. More than 30% of teachers in Malawi and Zambia are infected. In 7 countries in Southern Africa at least 20% of the population is infected with concentrations of more than 30% in high mobility areas such as the military, tea estates, mining areas etc. In 1999 South Africa and Kenya lost 100,000 teachers each, Zimbabwe and chronic illness. Education has the largest reservoir of vulnerable 15–24 years who have the fastest rate of infection.

Solutions proposed include ensuring that education inculcates life skills education focusing on human sexuality. In addition, damage presentation must be emphasized by focusing on the “*window of hope*,” the primary school age, through multi channels such as the curriculum, newsletters, peer counseling etc.

Gender and Equity Issues

Several practical examples of addressing gender and equity concerns were given during the conference.

Nova Scotia - - How do you make issues that affect minority populations government priorities? Managing diversity and ensuring that public institutions reflect the diverse nature of society requires ensuring equitable, accessible and inclusive education. Note the relatively new diversity programs in Nova Scotia, about 5 years old, to address problems of Aborigines and Canadian Africans even though the numbers are so small (about 12,000 Aborigines). Programs need to address under-representation, provide role models in the public school system and improve the quality of the learning environment, give them voice in school boards, provide learning resources that promote understanding of their history and cultural heritage.

Alternative basic education for Karamoja in Uganda—special program that incorporates the nomadic needs of the Karamoja and of improving girls education. Burying the pencil and then unburying it an apt metaphor for developing education system suited to the cultural needs. Children do their chores first then go to school and the parents are welcome to participate.

Girls enrolment program in Uganda—scheme operates in 15 districts in Uganda and it offers grants to

schools which have made a successful attempt at encouraging girls enrolment, persistence and performance in the form of an award to the school.

Child and Woman trafficking prevention in Bangladesh—Nearly ½ million sex workers in India are from Bangladesh and Nepal and some 200,000 women and girls have been trafficked out of Bangladesh to India, Middle East and Pakistan into bonded slavery, servitude and prostitution. Program creates awareness, organizes repatriation rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims.

THE INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION

The 1990s witnessed major changes in the scope and reach of information infrastructure, mostly, in industrialized countries. The dramatic expansion of Internet and World Wide Web (www) as well as rapid deployment of wireless network are the most visible hallmarks of the “networking revolution.” The forces of technological advance and competition are driving the infrastructure at a dizzying speed. (See box 2)

In addition, the information revolution has been decreasing the cost of storing, processing and transmitting information by 50% every 18 months making possible major changes in the way education is delivered and produced. At the heart of the technological and information revolution is the convergence of image, sound, books, computer networks into digital multimedia. This makes the worlds knowledge available anywhere any time and before long in any language.

Box 2:

- C Between 1995–98 the global telecommunication markets world wide connected 200 million telephone lines, 263 million subscribers, and 10 million leased lines.
- C While only 15 million Internet connections were made in 1991–94, this number exploded to 88 million in 1995–98.
- C While it took the telephone close to 75 years to reach 50 million users it took the www only four years to reach the same number.
- C In 1999 global e-commerce transactions amounted to US\$150 billion and it is expected that it will grow to US\$2–3 trillion by 2003.

To what extent can knowledge based solutions help? Bridging the economic divide between industrialized and non-industrialized countries is overwhelming a function of continuous learning and knowledge sharing. It is in the exchange of knowledge and experience in the marketplace of ideas that solutions to problems of development can be created. People need to constantly learn new skills and keep current skills up to date. The communication revolution holds out the promise of universal access to sources of knowledge and learning.

Incorporating ICTs into education, either as a subject or a mode of instruction, allows such a transformation in the education systems in at least three important ways. ICTs allow for increased access to education through *distance education*, which can potentially provide low cost higher education, low cost teacher training and cheaper on-line libraries. Distance education reduces distances and increased access to under served areas. In the non-industrialized countries where specialist teaching resources are scarce ICTs can be a major amplifier of limited educational resources making available knowledge and information from any part of the world. Teacher training programs could be dramatically improved through ICT.¹

ICTs can help **improve education quality** through the incorporation of interactive learning tools; which could be produced at relatively low cost, provide quick and equal access to information, enhance teacher training programs and enable networking among schools in different countries.

ICTs can help to **strengthen education management** by providing shared knowledge among policy makers through Knowledge Management Systems, shared databases and real time data/indicators, and evaluation of information projects.

But there are serious equity concerns that need to be honestly addressed: To what extent can non-industrialized countries take advantage of this powerful wave of technological change? Some argue that poor countries cannot afford the luxury of advanced technologies when they cannot afford to pay teachers a living wage or supply textbooks to schools. There is no doubt that the knowledge revolution brings with it the threat of a widening gap between industrialized and non-industrialized countries with disparities in access to knowledge, and information reinforcing existing differences in capital and resources. This gap offers risks of exclusion for the economies that do not adjust: it has been estimated that as much as half of the difference between Africa manufactured exports as a share of the GDP and East Asia share of the same could be accounted for by the weak state of communication networks.

¹The World Bank has developed, with external partners, the *Global Distance Education Network* (HYPERLINK <http://www.worldbank.org/disted>), a coherent and comprehensive guide to distance education.

- C The inevitability of ICT - - All nations have to recognize that they are part of a global village with implications for how we organize resources and activities. Knowledge economy can bind all countries as they participate in new economy.
- C The window of opportunity that ICT provides—light at the end of several dark tunnels. Teacher the ultimate change agent who is expected build strong learning communities but budget cuts make it difficult for them to fully perform their role. Out of the despair of an emerging “4th world” education by poorly trained, poorly paid teachers emerges the hope through ICT. Teacher training and working conditions for teachers can be significantly upgraded through ICT. But teachers need to teach in a manner in which they were not taught, and to respond to an agenda of change. This places heavy demands on teacher training especially for in-service. Use ICT to make teaching a job that the best want to do, and schools become where learners want to be. Some of the debt relief funding could be directed towards improving teaching and learning conditions. (Hargreaves)
- C Paradox is the need to emphasize education of an international standard and to become a part of that world but at the same time need to remain culturally and locally relevant. Some of this tension could be reduced by ensuring that all countries contribute to the knowledge economy and that they are not just consumers. Language of instruction.
- C Do these programs really deliver? All that we can see is that the kids are clever, they enjoy technology but is that new? Are we breaking new frontiers in actual learning processes? How do you measure outcomes and cost effectiveness? Is this the technology that enables us to make the leap? How is this helping with EFA? Can developing countries afford them, if not who pays? This is where partnership with industry comes important.
- C Promotion of inappropriate technology i.e. focus on IT when it is not yet appropriate. Other technology e.g. print media, radio would work better. Solution: ensure that training in IT is provided to teachers.
- C *Key challenge*—is developing content that to avoid danger of “edutainment” temptation go for stuff that is freely available rather than good education material.

Practical examples

i) Colme-innovation in technology and media project (David Walker) Bridging the ICT technology gap (COL)—create sustainable ad creative media models. Video equipment used in agricultural extension to train farmer’s Caribbean and technical vocational students in Samoa. It can enable relatively unsophisticated people to share their experiences.

Radio broadcasting station in a suitcase—to set up community radio stations in Uganda. Ancillary equipment in the form of wind up radio and satellite signal receiving radio waves. (HYPERLINK <http://ww.col.org>)

ii.) The Acacia project—an IDRC program.

iii) ICT—UK National Grid for Learning—a national strategy for using the Internet in education. It enhances new approaches to learning, prepares teachers for innovative new roles on-line, builds a knowledge base creativity, creates new institutions to offer lifelong learning, strengthens partnerships between government education and training, industry and local communities and creates international links to bridge the digital divide. By March 1999, 93% of secondary schools and 62% of primary schools were already connected to the NgfL. About 2 billion pounds spent on the program.

iv) University for Industry—SMEs, multimedia, automotive components. Does not offer higher

education courses or certificates.

POST SECONDARY ISSUES

The conference didn't spend a great deal of time of post secondary issues, since the issues at lower levels of schooling (mainly) appeared to be so preoccupying for many countries.

However, more than a few participants recognized the need of countries to develop the educational system in their countries at all levels.

Similarly, countries recognize that while Universal Primary Education may be a sine qua non for both development and democracy, the contributions of post secondary institutions are vital if countries are to develop to their fullest.

In this connection, a symposium at this conference on universities and development has made a number of recommendations, including the need to impress upon Commonwealth governments the need to ensure that the message gets across that without the participation and success of universities, developing countries are likely to be excluded from the growth associated with the modern knowledge economy.

As well, without the development of the university system, countries will not be able to contribute to the body of knowledge and research so important to their own and others' advancement.

Some countries have been turning towards the establishment of private universities as an answer to their need for much greater capacity for higher education.

Another important post secondary sector is that which comprises the colleges and polytechnics, and to comment on some of the work being done in that area will be Gerry Brown, who is the President of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, and who moderated the panel of Education and Skills Development.

APPENDIX 3

Three Case Studies in Education in Canada

14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers

THREE CASE STUDIES IN EDUCATION IN CANADA:

DISTANCE, DIVERSITY, AND DEVOLUTION CHALLENGES OF THE GLOBAL ERA

BACKGROUND

The Canada country paper prepared for the 14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers reveals a number of compelling examples of how jurisdictions in this country are tackling typically Canadian challenges in education in terms of distance, diversity and the devolution of decision-making.

For hundreds of years, the people of the northernmost sweep of the North American continent have had to deal with vast distances, small and scattered populations with diverse backgrounds and a need to come together to make decisions on governance and the delivery of common services such as education.

DISTANCE

Canada occupies the second-largest land mass in the world, almost ten million square kilometres. The distance from St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland and site of Signal Hill where Marconi received the first radio transmission beamed from Cornwall, England in December 1901, to Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, is some 4800 kilometres, about the same as from Pretoria, South Africa to Accra, Ghana.

Saskatchewan is a western Canadian province of about 650,000 square kilometres (seven percent of Canada's land/water mass) and approximately one million (a little over three percent) of Canada's 30 million people. In the Saskatchewan Education case study, great distances, a harsh climate and a scattered student population are the background to an account of how the province developed its e-Learning capacities to address the formidable challenge of providing equitable educational services. Its success is attributed to the sharing of responsibility among educational partners that include the provincial education ministry, school divisions and the private sector.

DIVERSITY

The first humans may have reached Canada as long as 80,000 years ago. Certainly, the North American continent has been populated for at least 10,000 years. Descendants of these early settlers still comprise about two percent of Canada's current population. Between the 11th and 14th centuries,

there was intermittent contact with Norse sailors but by the early 16th century, the arrival of Grand Banks fisherman from Europe, followed by Jacques Cartier who made contact with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia in 1534-35 , set a trend of immigration to Canada that continues today.

The *Indian Act* of 1876 gave control over the education of First Nations peoples to the federal government even though education is a provincial government responsibility. The Nova Scotia case study documents initiatives to return control of education on reserves in Nova Scotia to the Mi'kmaq through a tripartite transfer of jurisdiction, the first of such agreements in Canada.

While many Europeans of Scottish and Irish descent made new homes in Nova Scotia in the 18th and 19th centuries, this province was also the destination of many African immigrants, most of whom arrived in the late 18th century from the United States. The case study shows how Nova Scotia education and community leaders have addressed the challenge of creating an environment conducive to learning for all students regardless of gender, race or colour.

DEVOLUTION

Canada is a federation of ten provinces and three territories, each of which, within a system of shared powers, is responsible for education. In 1870, the Northwest Territories was acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company and Great Britain. It is Canada's northernmost landmass and extends to within 800 kilometres of the North Pole. Great distances, combined with a small population (less than half of one percent of the Canadian population) who live in a number of mainly tiny settlements, have influenced the development of education self-governance.

The case study provided by the Northwest Territories demonstrates the major impact of the devolution of decision-making as rapid changes occur in the administration of public education. The Dogrib Community Services Board provides a new and unique model of governance for managing integrated programs and services by uniting tribal and public authorities. One example of how this works in practice is the "one-stop shop" at Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School where early education programs help single parents return to high school.

CONCLUSION

Canadian education authorities are using unique and innovative approaches to come to grips with a variety of challenges to meet educational needs arising from vast distances, small, scattered and diverse populations and a shift in the power and duties of education administrators.

November 2000

APPENDIX 4

14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, 26-30 November 2000

COMMUNIQUÉ

(The following summary of the content and outcomes of the Conference is provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat on behalf of Ministers of Education.)

The Fourteenth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers was held in Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada, from 26 to 30 November 2000. It was opened by Senator Gildas Molgat, Leader of the Government in the Senate, and was chaired by the Hon Glenn Hage, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training of the Province of Saskatchewan and Chair of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Ministers reviewed developments in education across the world in the light of globalising forces, which present both challenges to the achievement of equity and opportunities for enhancing diversity. They reflected on how the goals and aspirations emerging from recent world conferences on education could be translated into effective action in a Commonwealth context. This context includes the serious threats to health, human security and national development posed by HIV/AIDS, the pressing issue of burdens of debt, and the particular vulnerabilities of small states and countries affected by armed conflict. Ministers noted the many achievements of education co-operation in the Commonwealth over the last 40 years and, in their Halifax Statement and its associated Action Plan, renewed their determination to improve education and human development in their countries and to collaborate to achieve these goals. To this end the Ministers intend to make a formal presentation to the High Level Review Group and in so doing emphasise that the promotion of Commonwealth education co-operation should remain a key and discrete function of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The work programmes, plans and financing of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and its submission to the Commonwealth High Level Group were discussed in detail and warmly endorsed. Consideration was also given to the enhancement of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, to the role of physical education and sport in education and to the importance of citizenship education to build a robust and democratic civil society.

2929

HALIFAX STATEMENT ON EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

2. In their Halifax Statement, Ministers set out a framework that would guide Commonwealth co-operation in education for the foreseeable future. They affirmed their commitment to achieving education for all in keeping with the goals set at Jomtien in 1990 and the framework for action agreed at Dakar in 2000. They re-emphasised their belief in the central role of education in the development process, the value of Commonwealth agencies, teacher organisations, NGOs and institutions in advancing educational development and the need for greater collaborative efforts within the Commonwealth in this area. Ministers also stressed their own commitment to using education to enhance the personal, community and national development efforts in their respective countries, and to working in a collaborative spirit of Commonwealth co-operation towards these ends. They outlined a frank and realistic overview of the many challenges facing Commonwealth countries, but also highlighted a sense of hope from some of the success stories and promises of partnership and international support. Ministers agreed on a small set of projects that would form the initial Action Plan for the Halifax Statement and agreed that there would be a rolling Action Plan that would make it possible to take on board new projects and sunset old ones. Ministers agreed that the Action Plan was to be carried out by clusters of countries, agencies, teacher organisations and NGOs that share an interest in and have a commitment to the activity in question. Ministers mandated the Commonwealth Secretariat to monitor and report on the implementation of the Action Plan that forms part of the Halifax Statement.

EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL ERA: CHALLENGES TO EQUITY, OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSITY

3. Ministers had extensive discussions in plenary and committee sessions on the main theme of their conference “Education in a Global Era: Challenges to Equity, Opportunities for Diversity”. They emphasised the timeliness and critical importance of this theme and the fact that it dealt with globalisation concerns in relation to two of the most pivotal issues in education and development. In a wide-ranging discussion, Ministers highlighted some of the constraints and challenges resulting from globalisation, but also outlined the opportunities to be grasped through globalisation. They focused their discussion on the search for feasible strategies and concrete action within the context of Commonwealth education co-operation. There was a strong concern about the impact of globalisation in terms of education and cultural integrity and the role of member states in safeguarding local education systems and cultures.

4. The need to intensify efforts to promote gender equity in access to education was given strong emphasis. While it was conceded that in some member states boys were under-achieving it was also felt that the access of girls to education was a priority issue for the Commonwealth as a whole. Also, following the lead of the keynote speaker Mrs Janet Museveni (First Lady of Uganda), Ministers highlighted the critical importance of bringing the benefits of education to disadvantaged populations in their countries. They highlighted lessons that had been learned in terms of making the educational process and provision sensitive to the cultural values and beliefs of these populations. Strong political leadership and adequate resources were stressed as important pre-requisites for success in this area.

5. Ministers recognised that education is a liberating force with moral and spiritual dimensions as well as a contributor to social and economic development. They therefore emphasised the need for re-orienting education in Commonwealth countries along the following lines:

- education should produce thinkers rather than mere implementers; and
- education should be more holistic, dealing with all levels and different approaches.

6. During their discussions Ministers emphasised the role of education as a tool for achieving and effectively managing pluralism in society as a pre-requisite for maximising social and economic development. Pluralism has to be accepted and celebrated rather than merely being tolerated. They highlighted the critical importance of helping countries make use of new technologies in the delivery of education and the need to prevent weaker members of the Commonwealth from being marginalized as globalisation intensified. There was also a clear acknowledgement that each country has the responsibility to ensure that it develops the right policies and strategies to meet its own needs. In this regard Ministers felt there was a role for the Commonwealth in assisting with this process as well as in brokering the way in which other agencies intervene with assistance to countries.

7. Ministers discussed major obstacles to educational development at some length, including HIV/AIDS, natural disasters and civil conflicts. They recommended that:

- the Commonwealth makes increased use of education to combat HIV/AIDS through a holistic and multi-sectoral approach that emphasises prevention and mitigation; and
- the Commonwealth should develop strategies to ensure that education continues during periods of disruption due to civil conflict and/or natural disasters, both in the country directly affected and its neighbours.

8. Ministers made a number of recommendations for Commonwealth co-operation in education, along the following lines:

- the Halifax Statement should be used as the guiding instrument for education co-operation in the Commonwealth, and be given practical realisation through a rolling action plan;
- the Commonwealth should promote strategic mobility for capacity building and encourage regional as well as pan-Commonwealth mobility under a revised and expanded scheme of awards and exchanges;
- data collection, analysis and dissemination should be used to ensure a reliable database to inform policies and action plan;
- the Commonwealth should continue to give special emphasis to small states in education and human development work, while not neglecting the larger states where the bulk of the problem of access remains unresolved;

- the Commonwealth should promote greater use of education to encourage acceptance and respect for diversity of cultures. The attempt should be to pursue unity rather than uniformity of cultures;
- the Commonwealth should continue its work in brokering assistance to member countries from a wide variety of sources; and
- the Commonwealth should promote and expand exchanges at tertiary level while safeguarding local systems of higher education.

9. Ministers noted that the use of English in Commonwealth schools and universities provided access to a rich heritage of teaching resources and connectivity to the rest of the world. It brought benefits to countries in a world where the ability to tap global knowledge networks and compete in global markets are becoming increasingly important. At the same time, Ministers noted that in societies where a non-indigenous language is used as the medium of instruction, it tended to detract from the cultural sensitivity of their educational systems, impair access and stifle creativity. They emphasised the value of educational systems that are inclusive and culturally sensitive, but which at the same time ensured that learners retained a capacity to be part of an open global society. They requested the Commonwealth Secretariat to study these issues further and report to them at their next meeting.

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT EDUCATION WORK PROGRAMME AND TWO-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN IN EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

10. Ministers commended the excellent work carried out by the Education Department during 1997 – 2000, which was described as important and highly relevant to the needs of member countries of the Commonwealth. Strong appreciation was also expressed for the way in which such an impressive range of key activities had been accomplished using the very limited human and financial resources of the Department. There was special commendation of the Department's work in small states and an appreciation that the Commonwealth was now the leading player in this specialist area. Ministers also praised the Department's role in brokering funding and expertise from other agencies to benefit important work in member countries. They agreed that one of the most highly appreciated areas of work was in exchange of good practices facilitated by the Department. Ministers recommended that in reporting on its work the Department should highlight the impact on member countries and the benefits achieved. In this regard they also recommended that attention be given to evaluation of the many activities and projects to help determine what has worked and what has not, and why, so that countries could learn more from the work of the Secretariat. Ministers also suggested that greater emphasis should be given to publicising the work of the Secretariat in a way that makes it easier for countries to access the information on a regular and systematic basis.

11. The Ministers also discussed the Two-Year Strategic Plan on Education and Human Development for the period 2000-2002. They expressed satisfaction that the re-organisation of the Department's work programme and staff portfolios was very much in line with trends in education and development that would benefit member countries. They observed that the proposed changes were in keeping with current efforts of Commonwealth countries to improve access, equity and quality in education as well

as in capacity building and utilisation for policy formulation and implementation in education. The introduction of tasks related to building knowledge banks for education in various regions of the Commonwealth was highly commended as a key innovation that would benefit co-operation in education and make the work of the Department more effective. Ministers requested a more explicit emphasis in the plan on gender and on the role of education in promoting democracy, citizenship and other values that are central to the Commonwealth. Some Ministers raised the issue of resources for the new plan and cautioned that efforts should be made to match resources to the range of proposed activities if expectations were not to be raised in an unrealistic manner.

COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

12. Ministers enthusiastically received the comprehensive report of the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning, and commended COL on its achievements over the last three years, made possible through the skilful leveraging of its limited resources in order to magnify its impact throughout the Commonwealth. Ministers also considered COL's Three Year Plan (2000-2003), the strategic vision of which had previously been endorsed by Heads of Government during their meeting in Durban, November 1999.

13. Ministers noted COL's work and accomplishments of the past three years, endorsed the Three Year Plan (2000-2003), and confirmed their desire to give effect to the decision of Heads of Government to endorse an annual core budget of \$9 million.

14. Many delegations recorded their gratitude for the assistance provided them by COL and encouraged COL to be bold in its interpretation of its mandate in the face of the rapid transformation in education and training as a consequence of the information and communications revolution. They expressed appreciation for the analysis COL had provided of the trends in virtual education and encouraged it to look for innovative ways in which it could help local institutions strengthen their presence in this environment, perhaps by responding more positively to appeals for COL to become more directly engaged in the process for accreditation and credit recognition as well as quality assurance. Ministers recognised the efficacy of distance education systems, and re-iterated their keen desire to see these deployed in the interests of teacher training, basic education for all, skills development and improved access, especially for girl children and women.

15. Most countries made formal pledges of financial support for the Three Year Plan, many confirming significant increases over previous years with a view to permitting the goal of \$9 million, agreed to by CHOGM, to be realised.

16. Ministers also warmly received and strongly endorsed the proposed submission from COL to the High level Review Group reviewing the future of the Commonwealth.

HIGHER EDUCATION CO-OPERATION

17. The Report on the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) for 1996-1999 was received with appreciation by Ministers. They noted with pleasure that forty per cent of

successful applicants over the three-year period were women, marking a continuing trend of increasing female participation. Ministers approved a number of proposed changes to the administration of the CSFP, which had been designed to raise the profile of the Plan, increasing the number of participating countries, expanding its flexibility, improving communication and overall co-ordination and strengthening partnerships in the nomination and selection of candidates.

18. Ministers were pleased to note that the CSFP UK Tracer Study: Initial Findings, while reflecting work still in progress, provided clear evidence that many scholars returned to make valuable contributions in their home countries and to reach positions of high prominence in academia, government and the private sector. These findings confirmed the continuing value of the scheme and Ministers urged that further tracer studies should be conducted covering all awarding countries and that efforts should be made to collate an alumni register as a first step in utilising this valuable resource to promote the Commonwealth and its image.

19. Ministers warmly thanked the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) for their continuing collaboration to monitor and report on the progress of the CSFP scheme. They also noted with approval the report on the Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium (CUSAC). This had developed from a pilot study initiated by the Commonwealth Secretariat into a pan-Commonwealth student mobility scheme, now administered by the ACU. In the short period since transferring to the ACU, CUSAC had expanded rapidly to involve over 70 universities, with over 200 students per year benefiting. Ministers commended this further example of the generating and incubating role of the Secretariat's Education Department and its effective collaboration with a Commonwealth partner. Gratitude was expressed to the ACU for its important contributions to educational co-operation and to enhancing student mobility and academic exchanges in the Commonwealth.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

20. Ministers welcomed the report of the CHOGM Committee on Co-operation through Sport (CCCS) on the role of physical education and sport in education and development. They recognised the important contribution made by physical education and sport to all youth, and particularly to disadvantaged youth, including young girls, youth at risk and those with special needs. They also recognised the importance of promoting the benefits of participation in sport and physical activity, as necessary underpinnings to life-long health, well-being and achievement in a wide variety of spheres and as a crucial aspect of individual, community, social and economic development. Ministers supported the proposal by the CCCS to establish an informal advisory expert group on sport and education. They requested the CCCS to continue its work linking physical education and sport to education and to report to forthcoming meetings of Commonwealth Education Ministers. Ministers noted the Berlin Agenda for Action and the Declaration of Punta del Este regarding physical education and sport.

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

21. Reports from the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Institute on citizenship education were warmly received by Ministers. They recognised the essential role that such education plays in inculcating and sustaining the fundamental values of democracy, human rights, peace and justice on which the Commonwealth is founded. Citizenship education is crucial to developing and reinforcing each individual's personal sense of worth and responsibility and to building a robust civil society in which individuals have the knowledge, skills and capacities needed to fully engage in the democratic institutions and processes of their community and country. Ministers congratulated the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Institute for the excellent work they were doing in this field and encouraged them to strengthen their efforts to make its benefits available throughout the Commonwealth.

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE AND PARALLEL EVENTS

22. The Conference was attended by 290 delegates from 45 Commonwealth countries, 3 British Overseas Territories and 21 observer organisations, 37 of the country delegations being led by Ministers. COL participated, led by its President and Chairman. The observer groups included numerous Commonwealth, international, regional, and non-governmental organisations. Twelve members of the press were accredited and for the first time ever in a Commonwealth Ministers meeting were invited to be present throughout the entire proceedings.

23. In parallel to the Conference, an international symposium and trade fair was held, organised by the Department of Education, Nova Scotia, in partnership with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, Government of Canada, COL, the British Council, and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The symposium, on the theme 'Commonwealth Knowledge Solutions' attracted about 400 participants from around the world and the Trade Fair, under the title 'Shopping for Solutions', featured 70 booths displaying materials from Ministries, international agencies, NGOs, educational institutions and the private sector. Interactions with the Ministerial meeting took place at several joint events, including the Opening Ceremony, the Keynote Plenary Address given by Mrs Janet Museveni, First Lady of Uganda, a scheduled visit to the Trade Fair, and a Forum during which the combined participants participated in panel discussions. Ministers also received a report summarising the deliberations of the Symposium.

APPRECIATION

24. Ministers expressed their deep gratitude to the government and people of Canada, and in particular the Province of Nova Scotia, for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference and for the warmth of hospitality they had received. They also expressed their appreciation to the Commonwealth Secretariat for its excellent arrangements and the high quality of the working documents prepared for the Conference.

NEXT MEETING

25. Ministers agreed to hold their next Conference in 2003 at a place to be decided.

Commonwealth Secretariat
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
30 November 2000

APPENDIX 5

EDUCATION FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE *The Halifax Statement on Education in the Commonwealth*

We, Commonwealth Ministers of Education, at our 14th Triennial Conference in Halifax, Canada, having reflected on education co-operation in the Commonwealth over the past many decades, and the challenges we face at the beginning of a new century, and based on our shared ideals and guiding principles as set out in the Commonwealth Harare Declaration of 1991, agreed on the following:

1. We believe in the right of everyone to education. All persons have a right of access to lifelong learning, by every appropriate means, with full opportunity regardless of gender, race, colour, age, socio-economic status, physical and other disabilities, or geographic location. Education, including early childhood care and development, is an essential pre-requisite for individuals to achieve their full potential. It also contributes to a non-exploitative and non-violent society that will facilitate expansion of human capabilities and enhancement of competitiveness in a knowledge-based global economy. Education empowers the poor, safeguards the vulnerable, promotes economic growth and social justice, promotes the values of democracy, human rights, citizenship, good governance, tolerance and pluralism and provides moral and spiritual guidance. Higher education and research are among the important tools through which countries can achieve their development goals. Attention to gender equality, and to the inclusion of the disabled and marginalized, in access and opportunity are essential at all levels of education.

2. Over the years, we have witnessed gains in enrolment in our countries at all levels of education. But progress in many of our countries continues to be constrained by lack of financial and skilled human resources for the development, delivery and management of quality education. The burdens of civil conflict, natural disasters, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and unsustainable foreign debt are making matters worse. Globalisation is enhancing opportunities for networking, knowledge-sharing and entrepreneurialism, but it also creates new challenges to the coherence, integrity and quality of our educational systems. These developments are affecting equity of access and quality of education at all levels. We are deeply concerned that in the contemporary world more than 110 million school-age children, of which two-thirds are girls, do not have access to education, and over 800 million adults, of which 60 per cent are women, remain illiterate. We are aware that four of the nine high population countries with the lowest education enrolment and literacy levels are member countries of the Commonwealth. We are also aware that the small states, which make up almost two-thirds of the Commonwealth membership, face continuing capacity problems to develop, sustain and manage quality education at all levels.

3. Despite these constraints and setbacks, we live in hope of progress. We are encouraged that some resource-poor countries have been able to make impressive educational gains by adopting sound policies of good governance, careful management of resources and the introduction of innovative educational strategies and practices; and that most small states have achieved or are close to achieving universal access to basic education. We also note the significant progress made by the high population

states. Against this background, we reaffirm our commitment to the spirit of the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on education for all, and the goal of achieving universal access to sustainable quality basic education by 2015, as outlined in the Dakar Framework for Action of April 2000 and reiterated at the UN's 2000 Millennium Summit and the G8 summit. We further affirm that we are committed to the provision of lifelong learning for all, on a fair and equitable basis, through a diversity of appropriate opportunities. In this regard, we are encouraged by the new opportunities presented by modern information and communication technologies for improved access, greater flexibility and enhanced quality in education. We welcome the high degree of international co-operation and support for education, and the pledge made by the international community at Dakar that no country which shows serious commitment and has sensible plans for education will fail for lack of resources. We will strive to ensure that this pledge is honoured.

4. In pursuit of these commitments we pledge to make full use of the unique advantages of the Commonwealth organisations and agencies active in the area of education and training for human development. We believe that the Commonwealth's traditions of sharing resources and expertise offer a platform for collaboration and action that will enhance efforts to promote sustainable quality education for all at every level. Inherent in this belief is the value of academic interchange as well as student and knowledge mobility. The work of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Institute, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), and the many non-governmental and community-based organisations, teacher organisations and professional networks active in education in the Commonwealth constitute valuable assets that can assist us in the realisation of our goals. We therefore endorse the role of all these agencies, organisations and networks as vital to Commonwealth co-operation and the development of member countries. We also reaffirm our belief that education is pivotal in the work of the Commonwealth as a voluntary association of countries that share similar values and principles.

5. In addition to the above continuing programmes by Commonwealth agencies, we call upon the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop a data bank of existing strengths and resources within the Commonwealth which could be utilised for capacity building and help member countries identify priority programmes and projects that will enable clusters of countries and agencies to work collaboratively in order to give concrete meaning and practical realisation to this Statement. These priority items should constitute an Action Plan that will respond to change and renewal over the years. We endorse the following activities for Commonwealth countries and agencies to pursue as an initial Action Plan linked to the Halifax Statement. In this regard, the Commonwealth should ensure that gender concerns, specific to females in some countries and males in others, will be mainstreamed into all programmes and activities, as should issues of poverty and inclusion:

Resources for Learning: The Commonwealth Secretariat should explore ways of enhancing the capacity of member states to develop their own materials and to access quality teaching/learning materials at affordable prices for schools, to include adult literacy programmes, and tertiary institutions in Commonwealth countries. Resources may include high quality textbooks, audio/video cassettes, films, diskettes, CD-ROMS, and on-line materials as well as equipment and materials and the skills for developing and producing them.

Qualifications, Standards and Equivalencies: The Commonwealth Secretariat should establish a mechanism to propose accreditation guidelines and processes that will function to increase student and knowledge mobility and protect our citizens against malpractices. The Secretariat should also study on a continuous basis the impact of trans-national education on national systems with a view to safeguarding the quality, integrity and coherence of those systems.

School Improvement Programmes in Small States (SIPSS): The Commonwealth Secretariat in concert with other agencies should support the SIPSS programme of collaboration as recommended by the Seychelles meeting of education experts from Commonwealth small states. The main objective should be to improve school quality, with a focus on participatory school management, teacher-training and professional development, learner-centred improvements and community participation.

Education to Combat HIV/AIDS: Urgent efforts should be made to formulate and implement policies and strategies leading to an increase in education programmes and interventions for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and mitigating its impact on education. Education strategies for combating HIV/AIDS should also be intensified.

Education in Difficult Circumstances: Noting that civil strife, armed conflict and activities which serve to prolong them impact adversely on education at all levels, as do natural disasters, the Commonwealth should strive to strengthen education programmes for preventing conflict and mitigating the impact of conflict and natural disasters on education in disrupted societies. The Commonwealth should develop strategies to ensure that education continues during periods of disruption, both in the country directly affected and its neighbours. Education should be considered an important part of humanitarian assistance in periods of civil strife, armed conflict and natural disasters.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education: The use of ICT should be actively and systematically promoted through strategic initiatives that link countries, agencies, the private sector, teacher organisations and NGOs in key projects to expand access to education, increase flexibility of delivery and improve on quality, while protecting cultural and linguistic identities. These projects should also serve to bridge the “digital divide” in the Commonwealth. Establishment of a virtual university for small states using existing structures and capacities should be pursued by COL.

Scholarships, Fellowships and Exchange Schemes: The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan should be expanded and diversified so as to include more flexibility such as short term and split-site programmes along with traditional awards and, where appropriate, those which focus on developmental and poverty reduction objectives should be encouraged. The growth of other schemes designed to increase student and knowledge mobility, such as the Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium should also be encouraged.

Commonwealth Values Education: The use of education to promote values of democracy, human rights, citizenship, good governance, tolerance, etc., as espoused by the Commonwealth in its key declarations of principles should be strengthened. This should include development of life skills curriculum and training of teachers in this area.

Teacher Training and Professional Development: The pivotal role of teachers should be strengthened through project activities that focus on teacher training and development, as well as enhancing the status, professionalism and motivation of this most vital component of the education system.

6. We call on the Commonwealth Secretariat, COL, the Commonwealth Foundation, the ACU, the Commonwealth Institute and all other agencies and private organisations that share the Commonwealth's values to work together with us in implementing these commitments. We are encouraged by the excellent work at present undertaken by the relevant Commonwealth institutions.

We have requested the Commonwealth Secretary-General to provide us with an interim progress report and a comprehensive final report on the implementation of these decisions at our next triennial meeting.

Halifax, Nova Scotia,
Canada
30th November 2000

APPENDIX 6

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP: SUMMARY REPORT

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

November 23 - 25, 2000

Following the first CMEC meeting to plan for the Canadian presence at the International Trade Fair during the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, the public education community in Newfoundland and Labrador decided to offer a pre-conference workshop. The Conference office in Halifax and the Commonwealth office in London were very supportive of this initiative and provided mailing addresses and other appropriate information to their Newfoundland colleagues. Their assistance greatly helped make the pre-conference workshop a reality. A delegation of 20 attended, including six Ministers and representing the following eight countries, The Seychelles, Lesotho, Dominica, Tanzania, Nigeria, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Zambia and the United Kingdom.

Initially, the Newfoundland Minister of Education wrote to all Commonwealth Ministers inviting them to come to the province for a pre-conference workshop. As mailing lists for the Ministers' Conference and the Parallel Symposium were made available by the Halifax Conference office, invitation packages detailing the Newfoundland education system were forwarded to potential delegates. General information about the province was also provided including the fact that it was Britain's first Colony, claimed by Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583 and site of the first European landfall in North America.

A planning group was struck, representative of the Department of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, the College of the North Atlantic and the Kindergarten to twelve education system. The title of the workshop was "**Educational Diversity and Collaboration**". The Education Program included presentations on: the evolution of the province and the use of cultural history in shaping nations; developing educational resources in an underdeveloped community; linkages between secondary and post-secondary education; providing university education and research in Newfoundland and Labrador; and educating the educators. In addition, workshops were held on distance education development by both the university and the college and tours were provided to a number of educational facilities including the Health Sciences Centre, the Telemedicine Centre, the Ocean Engineering Research Centre and the International Student Centre.

The social program introduced participants to the rich musical culture of the province as well as our many culinary delights. The workshop ended with a tour of the highlights of St. John's which included afternoon tea at Government House hosted by the Lieutenant Governor and his wife. It is the hope of the Newfoundland education community that this very positive experience will result in many benefits for both the province and the countries who visited us as we explore joint ventures and partnerships together in the future.