



Commonwealth Secretariat

Report of the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers Access, Inclusion and Achievement: Closing the Gap Edinburgh, UK – 27-30 October 2003

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Commonwealth Secretariat

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FOREWORD



The 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2003 marked a significant turning point in Commonwealth Education Conferences. In recent years, to respond to specific needs and demands, new features have been added to the Conferences. In particular, a Parallel Symposium, which first appeared at the 1997 Botswana Conference has continued and diversified in presentation. At this year's Conference, delegates from the Parallel Symposium sat with Ministers and discussed issues of policy and practice in six key Action Areas.

A Youth Summit was also an innovation at 15CCEM. Two young people from each Commonwealth country were invited to attend the Summit. It was the first time Commonwealth youths had been invited to participate fully at a Ministerial Conference and they rose to the occasion by speaking eloquently with Ministers.

But, perhaps 15CCEM will be remembered more for its stand on key global education issues which affect Commonwealth countries. These were seen to include: access to education; inclusion; boys' and girls' achievement in education; education and human security; HIV/AIDS and education; and international teacher recruitment problems, particularly for Small States. In addition, Ministers focused upon the two education-related Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs)- Achieving Universal Primary Education, and Eliminating Gender Disparities in Primary and Secondary Education.

This Report, therefore, is both a record of outcomes and a catalogue of what were very engaging meetings between Ministers, Commonwealth education organisations, Parallel Symposium delegates, Commonwealth youths and development partners. The Report shows clearly the resolve of the Commonwealth to address key education issues and a commitment to work with partners in the global campaign to assist member countries towards achieving the MDGs in education.

I wish to thank the UK Government, the Scottish Executive, the British Council, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and other partners all of whom worked with us to plan, organise and deliver a highly successful 15CCEM.

Nancy Spence
Director
Social Transformation Programmes Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
London

CHAPTER ONE



Keynote Address

Humanity, Security and Educational Gaps

Amartya Sen

It is a great privilege for me to have the opportunity of speaking at this meeting of Commonwealth countries on education. I am also very happy that you have chosen Edinburgh as the venue of this important conference. I am very proud of my own associations with Edinburgh, which are quite extensive. So I welcome you to beautiful Edinburgh and to its wonderful intellectual community, of which I am privileged to be a nomadic member, as something of an academic gypsy¹. But to this general welcome I must add my particular belief that there could not be a better place for a meeting on “closing the gap” in education than the city of Adam Smith and David Hume, the earliest and greatest champions of education for all.

Why is it so important to close the educational gaps, and to remove the enormous disparities in educational access, inclusion and achievement? One reason, among others, is the importance of this for making the world more secure as well as more fair. H.G. Wells was not exaggerating when he said, in his *Outline of History*: “human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.” If we continue to leave vast sections of the people of the world outside the orbit of education, we make the world not only less just, but also less secure.

The precariousness of the world is now greater than it already was in H.G. Wells’ time in early twentieth century. Indeed, since the terrible events of September 11, 2001 – and what followed after that – the world has been very aware of problems of physical insecurity. But human insecurity comes in many different ways – not just through terrorism and violence. Indeed, even on the very day of September 11, 2001, more people died from AIDS than from physical violence including the atrocity in New York. Human insecurity can develop in many different ways, and physical violence is only one of them. While it is important to fight terrorism and genocide (and in this too, education can have a big role, as I will presently discuss), we must also recognise the plural nature of human insecurity and its diverse manifestations.

As it happens, widening the coverage and effectiveness of basic education can have a powerfully preventive role in reducing human insecurity of nearly every kind. It is useful to consider briefly the different ways in which

removing discrepancies and neglects in education can contribute to reducing human insecurity across the world.

The most basic issue relates to the elementary fact that illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity *in themselves*. Not to be able to read or write or count or communicate is a tremendous deprivation. The extreme case of insecurity is the certainty of deprivation, and the absence of any chance of avoiding that fate. The first and most immediate contribution of successful school education is a direct reduction of this basic deprivation – this extreme insecurity – which continues to ruin the lives of a large part of the global population, not least in the Commonwealth.

The difference that basic education can make to human life is easy to see. It is also readily appreciated even by the poorest of families. Speaking personally, it has been wonderful for me to observe how easily the importance of education is perceived even by the poorest and the most deprived of families. This emerges from some studies on primary education in India that we are currently undertaking (through the “Pratichi Trust” – a trust aimed at basic education and gender equity that I have been privileged to set up in India and Bangladesh through using my Nobel Prize money from 1998). As the results of our studies come in, it is remarkable to find how the parents from even the poorest and most depressed families long to give basic education to their children, to make them grow up without the terrible handicaps from which they – the parents – had themselves suffered.²

¹ My associations, which give me a great sense of belonging to this wonderful city, include being an alumnus of two universities here: Edinburgh University and Heriot-Watt University (admittedly my connections are only through honorary degrees but they generate a sense of closeness to the real students here), and also through my membership of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and having other associations with this great city (including the good fortune of receiving the Edinburgh Medal in 1997).

² The same general finding emerged from the much larger study on basic education in India that was undertaken by the PROBE team, *Public Report on Basic Education in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Indeed, contrary to claims often made, we have not observed any basic reluctance by parents to send their children – daughters as well as boys – to school, provided affordable, effective and safe schooling opportunities actually exist in their neighbourhood. Of course, there are many obstacles in giving shape to the dreams of parents. The economic circumstances of the families often make it very hard for them to send their children to school, particularly when there are fees to be paid.

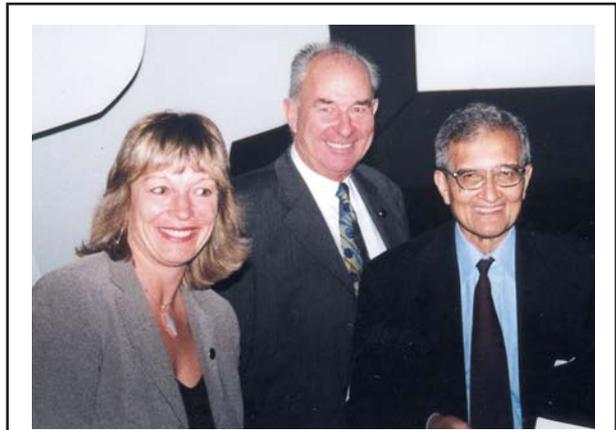
The obstacle of unaffordability must be firmly removed across the Commonwealth – indeed the world. I am, of course, aware that some champions of the market system want to leave school fees to the market forces. But this cannot but be a mistake given the social obligation to give the essential opportunity of schooling to all children. Indeed, Adam Smith, who provided the classic analysis of the power and reach of the market mechanism two and quarter centuries ago, wrote eloquently, sitting in Kirkcaldy (not far from here), why it would be wrong to leave this to the market:

*“For a very small expense the public can facilitate, can encourage, and can even impose upon almost the whole body of the people, the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education.”*³

There are other obstacles too. Sometimes the schools are very thinly staffed (many primary schools in developing countries have only one teacher), and parents are often worried about the safety of children, especially girl children (particularly in case the teacher fails to turn up, which seems to happen often enough in many of the poorer countries). Quite often, the parents’ reluctance has a rational basis, and these gaps too need to be addressed.

There are other barriers as well. Very poor families often rely on labour contributions from everyone, even the children, and this can compete with the demands of schooling. This unfortunate practice, though generated out of hardship, must also be removed, through regulation as well as by making the economic benefits of schooling clearer to all. This brings us to the second issue in understanding the contribution of schooling in removing human insecurity. Basic education can be very important in helping people to get jobs and gainful employment. This economic connection, while always present, is particularly critical in a rapidly globalising world in which quality control and production according to strict specification can be crucial.

Not surprisingly, all the cases of speedy use of the opportunities of global commerce for the reduction of poverty have drawn on help from basic education on a wide basis. For example, in Japan, already in the mid-



Professor Amartya Sen with the Secretary General and Jane Davidson, Minister of Education & Lifelong Learning, National Assembly for Wales

nineteenth century the task was seen with remarkable clarity. The Fundamental Code of Education, issued in 1872 (shortly after the Meiji Restoration in 1868), expressed the public commitment to make sure that there must be “no community with an illiterate family, nor a family with an illiterate person.” Thus – with the closing of educational gaps – began Japan’s remarkable history of rapid economic development. By 1910 Japan was almost fully literate, at least for the young, and by 1913, though still very much poorer than Britain or America, Japan was publishing more books than Britain and more than twice as many as the United States. The concentration on education determined, to a large extent, the nature and speed of Japan’s economic and social progress.

Later on, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other economies in East Asia followed similar routes and firmly focused on general expansion of education. Widespread participation in a global economy would have been hard to accomplish if people could not read or write, or produce according to specifications or instructions, or to have quality control.

Third, when people are illiterate, their ability to understand and invoke their legal rights can be very limited, and educational neglect can also lead to other kinds of deprivation. Indeed, this tends to be a persistent problem for people at the bottom of the ladder, whose rights are often effectively alienated because of their inability to read and see what they are entitled to demand and how. The educational gap clearly has a class connection.

It also has a gender connection since it can be a very important issue for women’s security. Women are often deprived of their due, thanks to illiteracy. Not being

³ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776, republished, eds., R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), I.ii (p. 27), and V.i.f (p. 785).

able to read or write is a significant barrier for underprivileged women, since this can lead to their failure to make use even of the rather limited rights they may legally have (say, to own land, or other property, or to appeal against unfair judgment and unjust treatment). There are often legal rights in rule books that are not used because the aggrieved parties cannot read those rule books. Gaps in schooling can, thus, directly lead to insecurity by distancing the deprived from the ways and means of fighting against that deprivation.

Fourth, illiteracy can also muffle the political opportunities of the underdog, by reducing their ability to participate in political arena and to express their demands effectively. This can contribute directly to their insecurity, since the absence of voice in politics can entail a severe reduction of influence and of the likelihood of just treatment of those who are kept on the wrong side of the gap.

Fifth, basic education can play a major role in tackling health problems in general and epidemics in particular. It is easy to see the importance of specialised health education (for example, on the way infections spread and how diseases can be prevented). But even general education can broaden a person's lines of thinking and generate social understanding in ways that may be extremely important in facing epidemiological problems. Indeed, some studies have suggested that general school education has a bigger impact on health than specialised health education itself has.

Sixth, empirical work in recent years has brought out very clearly how the relative respect and regard for women's well-being is strongly influenced by women's literacy and educated participation in decisions within and outside the family. Even the survival disadvantage of women compared with men in many developing countries (which leads to such terrible phenomenon as a hundred million of "missing women") seems to go down sharply – and may even get eliminated – with progress in women's empowerment, for which literacy is a basic ingredient.⁴

There is also considerable evidence that fertility rates tend to go down sharply with greater empowerment of women. This is not surprising, since the lives that are most battered by the frequent bearing and rearing of children are those of young women, and anything that enhances their decisional power and increases the attention that their interests receive tends, in general, to prevent over-frequent child bearing. For example,



Minister Roy Bodden, Cayman Islands and others await start of opening ceremony

in a comparative study of the different districts within India, it has clearly emerged that women's education and women's employment are the two most important influences in reducing fertility rates.⁵ In that extensive study, female education and employment are the only variables that have a statistically significant impact in explaining variations in fertility rates across more than three hundred districts that make up India. In understanding inter-regional differences, for example the fact that the state of Kerala in India has a fertility rate of only 1.7 (which can be roughly interpreted as 1.7 children on average per couple) in contrast with many areas which have four children per couple (or even more), the level of female education provides the most effective explanation.

There is also much evidence that women's education and literacy tend to reduce the mortality rates of children – of boys and girls, both. These and other connections between basic education of women and the power of women's agency (and its extensive reach) indicate why the gender gap in education produces heavy Social penalties.

I have so far concentrated on gaps in access, inclusion and achievement that differentiate one group of people from another. But this is also a good occasion to reflect a little on the gaps – of a very different kind – that exist in the coverage of the school curriculum. The nature of the curriculum is, of course, of obvious relevance to the development of technical skills (such as computing) that facilitate participation in the contemporary world. But there are also other issues involved, since schooling can be deeply influential in the *identity* of a person and the way we see ourselves and each other.

⁴ On this see my "Missing Women," *British Medical Journal*, 304 (1992), pp. 586-7, and also "Missing Women – Revisited," *British Medical Journal*, forthcoming (possibly in November 2003).

⁵ On this see Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, *India: Development and Participation* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), and the literature on this subject cited there.

This issue has received some attention recently in the special context of the role of fundamentalist religious schools, and there is need to pay attention to the narrowing of horizons, especially of children, that illiberal and intolerant education can produce. It is also important to recognise that lack of public facilities for the schooling of children often contributes greatly to the appeal and popularity of religious schools run by political militants.

Indeed, the nature of education is quite central to peace in the world. Recently the very deceptive perspective of the so-called “clash of civilisations” (championed particularly by Samuel Huntington) has gained much currency. It is important to see that what is most immediately divisive in this kind of theorising is not the idea – the *silly* idea – of the inevitability of a clash (that too, but it comes later), but the equally shallow prior insistence on seeing human beings in terms of one dimension only, regarding them just as members of one civilisation or another (defined mostly in terms of religion), ignoring their other affiliations and involvements.

There are two mistakes here. First, the classification is very crude. For example, India is put in the box of Hindu civilisation, even though with its 130 million Muslims (more than the entire British and French populations put together), India has many more Muslims than most so-called “Muslim countries” in the world. Huntington’s classification gives comfort only to Hindu sectarians.

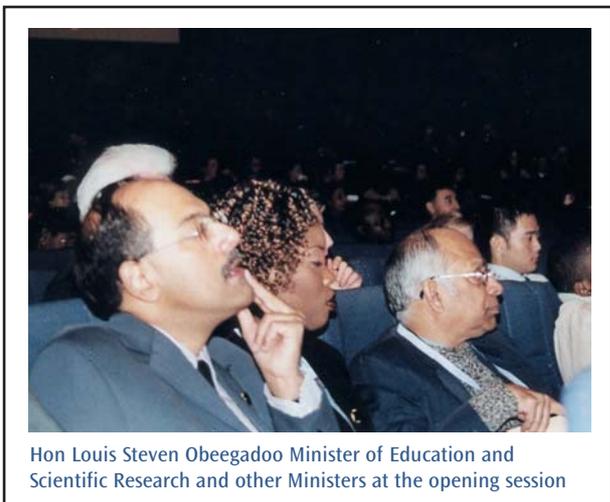
The second mistake is to assume that a person’s religion defines him or her reasonably adequately. But every human being’s identities have many different components, related to nationality, language, location, class, occupation, history, religion, political beliefs, and so on. A Bangladeshi Muslim is not only a Muslim, but also a Bengali and possibly quite proud of the



Participants at the opening session listen to Professor Amartya Sen

richness of the Bengali literature and other cultural achievements. Similarly, the history of the Arab world with which an Arab child today can potentially relate is not only the achievements of Islam (important as they are), but also the great secular accomplishments in mathematics, science and literature which are part and parcel of Arab history. Even today when a scientist in, say, the Imperial College uses an “algorithm,” he or she unconsciously celebrates the innovativeness of the ninth-century Arab mathematician, Al-Khwarizmi, from whose name the term algorithm is derived (the term “algebra” comes from his book, “Al Jabr wa-al-Muqabilah”).

To define people just in terms of religion-based classification of civilisations can itself contribute to political insecurity, since in this view people are seen as simply belonging to, say, “the Muslim world,” or “the Western world,” or “the Hindu world,” or “the Buddhist world,” and so on. To ignore everything other than religion in classifying people is not only to neglect many significant aspects of a person’s culturally rich background, but also to split people up, in a predesigned way, to make it easier for them to be recruited into potentially belligerent camps. I personally believe that it would be a mistake to add to the faith-based schools that are already in existence (they are mostly old Christian schools here), and compound the problem by having fresh ones, in the name of inter-community equity. Rather than reducing existing faith-based schools, actually adding others to them – Muslim schools, Hindu schools and Sikh schools to pre-existing Christian ones – may sharply add to an existing problem. This is especially so when new religious schools leave children very little opportunity to cultivate reasoned choice and decide how the various components of the students’ identities (related respectively to language, literature, religion, ethnicity, cultural history, scientific interests, etc.) should receive attention. It also makes religious leaders (no matter what their following might have



Hon Louis Steven Obeegadoo Minister of Education and Scientific Research and other Ministers at the opening session



The Ministers' Group photograph

been in the past among the respective groups of people who are – often nominally – members of particular “communities”) the new *ex officio* spokesmen for those “communities.” There is need not only to discuss the importance of our common humanity, but also to stress the fact that our diversities can take many distinct forms and that we have to use our reasoning to decide how to see ourselves, rather than being put firmly inside little boxes devised by the government.

The importance of non-sectarian and non-parochial curricula that expand, rather than reduce, the reach of reason can be hard to exaggerate. Shakespeare talked about the fact that “some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” In the schooling of children, we have to make sure that we do not have *smallness* thrust upon the young.

The idea of the Commonwealth has something to offer on the philosophy behind such a broad approach. The Queen herself, as the head of the Commonwealth, put the basic perspective with clarity and force half a century ago, shortly after her coronation, in 1953:

The Commonwealth... is an entirely new conception built on the highest qualities of the spirit of man: friendship, loyalty and the desire for freedom and peace.

In promoting friendship and loyalty, and in safeguarding the commitment to freedom and peace, basic education can play a vital part. This requires, on the one hand, that the facilities of education be available to all, and on the other, that children be exposed to ideas from many different backgrounds and perspectives and be encouraged to think for themselves and to reason.

Basic education is not just an arrangement for training to develop skills (important as that is), it is also a recognition of the nature of the world, with its diversity and richness, and an appreciation of the importance of freedom and reasoning as well as friendship. The need for that understanding – that vision – has never been stronger.

Keynote Speech – Keypoints

1. Education is a powerful tool and defence against many forms of human insecurity. Leaving vast sections of society from participation in education leads to human insecurity in its different manifestations.
2. Illiteracy removes people from participating in their country's political process, thereby removing their chances of influencing public policies and decisions.
3. Illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity and block access to important human rights. Not being able to read or write or communicate is a tremendous deprivation. Access to education can reduce this basic deprivation.
4. Basic education can play a major role in improving health and fighting epidemics; reducing fertility rates; reducing child mortality rates.
5. Even the poorest and most deprived parents long to give basic education to their children.
6. We should provide affordable, effective and safe schooling opportunities.
7. Barriers to access to education must be removed, this includes school fees, ensuring that schools have teachers that can teach children, addressing child labour issues.
8. Illiberal and intolerant education can produce narrow-mindedness in children. Access to a more liberal school curriculum is important.
9. Lack of public school facilities has led to new types of schools emerging, some of them with very narrow religious focus.
10. Policies of expanding school opportunities by opening up religious or faith schools need to be reviewed.

Minister of Education, Barbados

“Professor Sen’s keynote address and his words are very relevant to the development of the Barbadian education system and the wider Caribbean.

Commonwealth Caribbean countries face needs of national development, improving the well-being of the most vulnerable groups in the society and promoting racial harmony.

Lack of access to education presents critical issues and concerns for all countries. Post-independence education has been used as a leverage for national development. Education has been used as an instrument to combat slavery, colonialism and gender discrimination. Access to education relates to our ability to compete in the world in the sphere of new and emerging services.

Legislation makes education compulsory and exists throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean until the age of 16. However there are real issues of access which we wish to address at this meeting. Limited access occurs at the pre-school level. At tertiary level, also, there are concerns for access. There is still only a 24% transfer rate from secondary to university, whereas in OECD countries enrolment rates are over 50%.

In Barbados, gender and access issues are a problem relating to men, not women. Special needs education is

another area of concern, but, perhaps of greatest concern is the proposal by industrialised countries for GATS-related free trade and the movement of educational services. Barbados views this development with worry.

The National Strategic Plan vision is for Barbados to develop a socially just, prosperous and globally competitive society. No philosophical divide relates to this across the political parties in our country and there is support for a significant part of expenditure being spent on education.”

Ministers of Education, Canada

“In Canada we recognise that high levels of achievement require attention to high level education. We strive for continuous employment for teachers, retention in schooling, careful education transitions and collaboration with all educational partners.

Aboriginal education in Canada is important as 4.4% of the population has aboriginal ancestry. Aboriginal achievement in education needs a response programme. Canada is in the process of working on an enhancement and revitalisation programme with funding for different aboriginal groups.

Prof Sen has shown how educational achievement is important. We hope that the Commonwealth will continue to take up the challenge.”

CHAPTER TWO

Access, Inclusion and Achievement – Discussions of the Ministerial Committees

Ministers discussed the theme of the Conference in the first Ministerial Plenary session and then in Committees. Their deliberations brought to attention the key issues in Access, Inclusion and Achievement. Throughout, Ministers addressed the need for more community participation and three-way partnerships between governments, communities and development partners. Partnerships with the private sector and NGOs were also seen as especially important.

Access: The Issues

Ministers recognised that disparities in access to education are manifold and are frequently based upon cultural, social, political and economic factors including:

- Gender
- Distance to schools in rural areas
- Children with special needs
- Teacher training, demand and supply
- Transition from primary to secondary school
- The Digital Divide.

The discussions noted that these disparities can be reduced and partially alleviated through different interventions including the following factors:

Finance

The costs of schooling – fees, transportation and learning materials – were identified as possibly the most significant barriers to access. Also, poverty experienced by many parents was seen as a problem for many children. On occasion, Ministries of Education have responded to this by providing grants or bursaries. But improvement in access was seen not simply as a case of removing fees, but also creating enabling conditions.

Ministers noted that whereas developed nations can spend more on education, developing countries find it difficult to match their educational needs with available resources. They discussed the view that there are barriers to accessing loans from organisations such as the World Bank. They noted that there are burdensome conditions attached to and problems connected with the process of acquiring loans.

Culture

Ministers noted that schools should be welcoming and child-friendly. Issues such as language, culture, teachers reflecting parents' cultures and facilities for girls were

all highlighted. This was seen as not just an issue for the developing countries: states like the United Kingdom had issues around teenage mothers, and education for asylum seekers and immigrants.

Infrastructure

Schooling in rural areas was seen as a common difficulty. In many cases problems with transport and telecommunications led to non-attendance. The poor condition of schools was seen as a barrier to recruiting and retaining teachers in rural areas.

Objectives

While all contributions from Ministers were supportive of universal provision of education, some had differing ambitions based upon their baselines. For some the main issues related to basic education and quality in secondary schools, for others the concern was seen as tertiary education.

However, one issue common to all was seen as the preference of students for academic degrees over vocational qualifications. This is the case, even though vocational skills are in greater demand. Ministers of Education agreed that there is little to be gained from universal education without improvements in the relevance of curriculum and quality of teaching and learning.

Teachers

Participants reported a dire shortage of teachers. There were many reasons given for this: in rural areas there was insufficient accommodation for teachers; payment of salaries continues to be unreliable, while in many countries teachers are lost to other countries or professions. A need was identified to boost the professionalism of teachers, and this, it was seen, could not be done through salaries alone.

Inclusion: The Issues

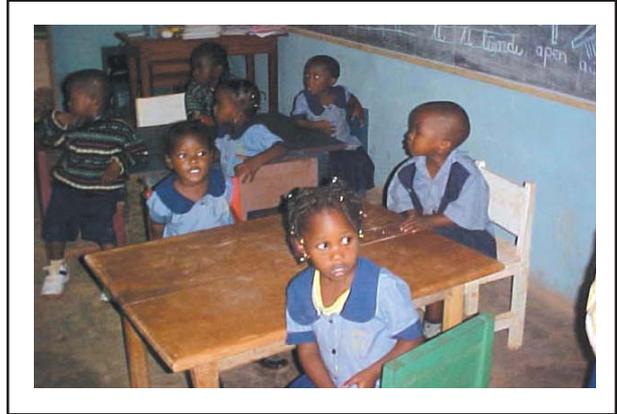
The difference between ‘access’ and ‘inclusion’ was discussed. It was suggested that whilst ‘access’ relates to the provision of educational opportunities (e.g. compulsory primary education), ‘inclusion’ is about tackling the factors which prevent some social groups taking up the opportunities which are available. This often relates to specific groups, such as nomads, HIV/AIDS orphans, street children, the urban poor and those in remote communities.

Various examples of current interventions and strategies were described, including mobile classrooms, boat schools, flexible timetabling, ‘one-teacher schools’ (where one teacher stays with a mixed-age class for several years), and ‘satellite’ schools.

The potential value of sharing knowledge and understanding of best practice raised questions. The suggestion was made that consideration could be given to a new initiative by the Commonwealth of Learning, using new technologies to create an online database of good practice, perhaps based on surveys on specific subjects.

A range of views were expressed on the issue of teaching in the mother tongue, about the provision of mother tongue teaching materials, and whether this should be a priority for the Commonwealth.

The issue of school feeding was identified as being of great importance in encouraging poorer children to attend school, and in ensuring they were able to give proper attention to their work whilst in school. In some areas parents, particularly mothers, have been encouraged to share in the development of the school



by working on a school farm. This was seen to bring benefits for the wider community as well as for the school.

There was general agreement that parents can be fundamental to the achievement levels of a child so that they too need to be educated.

In conclusion, while inclusion could be promoted at a school level and at a national level, there was also a vitally important issue of inclusion at the international, pan-Commonwealth level. The view was strongly expressed that, while positive initiatives could be taken at the school and national levels, in the last instance the poorest countries of the Commonwealth would still face a situation of inadequate resources.

The proposal was therefore made that the Commonwealth as a whole, and most particularly the wealthier countries within it, should use their influence, within the G8 and elsewhere, to ensure that the Dakar commitments were adhered to by the international community.

Achievement: The issues

Ministers noted that historically achievement has been concerned overwhelmingly with academic performance to the neglect of vocational and other forms of attainment. Ministers urged that there should be a parity of esteem between academic and non-academic education and the development of ways to transfer credit between countries. For this reason international benchmarking becomes very important as it assists with international assessments and comparisons.

Ministers suggested that the points at which achievement of a child is measured are very important. Yet it is very difficult, at the early stage, to reasonably and accurately measure achievement. “We need to distinguish between early stages and later stages for measuring achievement. We need to ensure continuous



development” said one Minister. There was general agreement that an objective reference point for measuring achievement, one not focused on

examinations alone, needs to be developed. It was seen as the only way to determine whether value for money is attained. 'There is a need to measure the value added by education, for example, achievements based on producing better human beings and better citizens' said one participant.

Education could be seen as a "Theatre of Operation" with a package of requirements and decentralisation of management. Management of the school system is crucial for achievement. School administrators play

a very important role when it comes to influencing achievement. They are the experts, the human resource directors and the people with the vision, so they need to be well trained.

In conclusion, Ministers stated that achievement is influenced by a variety of inputs including physical conditions. For example, schools in rural areas face a different set of conditions to those in urban areas and there is a need to recognise this.

CHAPTER THREE

Sub-themes: Discussions of Ministers and Participants of the Parallel Symposium

An innovation at the 15CCEM was the attendance of Parallel Symposium delegates at the ‘Roundtable’ session. This provided an opportunity for Ministers to discuss sub-themes with participants attending the Parallel Symposium. There were six Roundtables and discussion in each was lively and extremely well informed.

The ideas emerging from each of the six Roundtables included issues related to policy and legislation, curriculum and teacher education and supply.



1. Universal Primary Education (UPE)

It was generally agreed that countries need to implement commitments to make primary education free and accessible, and to learn from those Commonwealth countries having undertaken such policies. There was a recognition that although access to education is different to completion of education both have been addressed through the Dakar Education For All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The international donor community was encouraged to re-visit these Goals and, with Ministries of Education, re-commit to them.

Indeed, it was suggested that there must be political commitment, leadership and strategic frameworks to define constraints, and strategies for actions.

In some cases, policies for UPE should target specific excluded groups, eg Nomads, street children, refugees, and children from fishing communities. Such policies and interventions should pay particular attention to gender balance and gender equality. However, one of the main groups not participating in primary education is girls. The need to increase their participation – their

access, attendance, achievement, completion – in education was highlighted. The development of girl-friendly teaching and learning strategies, including the use of the mother tongue, were discussed as well as the need for more basic facilities, such as girls’ toilets and safe classrooms.

Ministers collectively affirmed that ‘education has a role in enabling minority cultures and language groups to gain their rights as respected partner communities.’

The use of mother tongue in teaching and learning was seen as making education more accessible to this wide range of learners. In some instances the use of open and distance learning might improve access. In addition, national curriculum and assessment frameworks may be able to incorporate learning and teaching materials so that learners become empowered as agents of their own learning.

There was agreement that all policies should be underpinned by the principles of equality, transparency, mutuality and social justice. These were seen as crucial and should be interwoven throughout all work of governments.

Ministers noted that a combination of teacher shortages and HIV/AIDS will jeopardise the achievements of the 2015 MDG targets. It was seen as important that Ministries of Education identify gaps in teacher supply, ensure co-ordination of policies on teacher supply, and target support for teacher professional development.

It was seen, therefore, that there are many barriers to UPE. Ministries were asked by Parallel Symposium delegates to identify areas for collaboration and partnerships especially in the realm of civil society. These, it was suggested, could provide solutions to many problems in access and in UPE. Partnerships, it was felt, could provide a legitimate basis for community involvement in school planning, curriculum

development, monitoring and accountability. Indeed, participants noted that partnerships between Ministries, civil society and the private sector need to be explored for *what* can be delivered and *how* that delivery can assist governments in meeting commitments.

Funding was viewed as possibly the greatest barrier to UPE, with governments being called upon to show greater political commitment to primary education. It was suggested that, in addition to the removal of fees, subsidies to families might become necessary. It was noted that access and retention are directly related to wealth: the wider issue of poverty must be viewed as a significant barrier to UPE. So although UPE is costly, it was seen as cost effective generally.

Recommendations:

1. Ministries of Education must exhibit political commitment, leadership and strategic frameworks to define the constraints and strategies for action.
2. Relationships between local and central government are crucial in implementing efficient educational programme interventions.
3. Ministries of Education should learn from each other through sharing of 'best practices' in achieving UPE.

2. Eliminating Gender Disparities in Education

Ministers expressed themselves keen to achieve the UN Millennium 2005 target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education. They suggested that a stock take on progress on policy and legislation to date would be useful as a starting point for sharing experiences.

Participants at this Roundtable supported attempts to integrate gender issues into teacher training, professional development and curriculum reform, thereby positioning a new politics of gender into the mainstream. There was agreement that there needs to be a greater emphasis on mainstreaming, not just in education but in other areas, such as employment. It was felt that a genuine mainstreaming approach would allow countries to tackle a wide range of issues, including girls' access to and retention in schools as well as boys' self exclusion at the critical years of early adolescence.

Discussion also focused upon the importance of member countries having a legislative and policy framework to support gender equality in education. Ministers could draw to the attention of the Heads of Government, at their meeting in Abuja in December 2003, the policy and legislation requirements needed to guarantee the protection of women and girls, especially adolescent girls.

It was noted that the structures and culture of schooling expressed through curriculum, pedagogy, organisation, resource allocation and the work force, all help to eliminate dominant patterns of gender socialisation. Indeed, it was suggested that policies on gender issues could be based on a more careful analysis of data to disaggregate disparities by social class, urban and rural patterns, private and public schooling.

There was agreement that local communities need to be engaged in curriculum development: this could involve dialogue with communities as they reflect upon traditions and cultural practices that diminish participation at school. Once these cultural practices have been defined, the curriculum could be re-designed to encourage girls' and boys' retention in schooling.

Finally, participants stressed the need for mandatory enactment of affirmative action for women in the highest levels of government and education, and a need to support education jurisdictions to monitor policy, practice and outcomes. The point was made that issues for women are not just about access. In higher education in South Africa, for example, women are accessing higher education, but tend to study a narrower range of subjects. It may be important, therefore, to address issues such as the 'micro politics' of institutions.

Recommendations:

1. There should be a renewed focus by Ministers on early childhood education, to enlist children and families in positive gender roles.
2. Ministers should support sharing of best practice, both in terms of policy making and turning policy into action on the ground.
3. Ministers should increase their use of the Commonwealth Secretariat website, which could be developed further, so that information may be exchanged through this resource.
4. Ministries of Education should aim at achieving a better distribution of male and female teachers in education systems in Commonwealth countries.

3. Improving Quality in Education

In a lively debate, participants discussed what is meant by 'quality' and how it can be achieved.

Ministers confirmed commitments to the delivery of quality education and noted that teachers' organisations are an integral part of the process of achieving quality education. They should not be seen as part of the problem. This is the case, especially, in the context of strategies to achieve the 2015 MDGs.

It was recognised that there was little point in providing access to education if the quality of the education delivered by the teacher was not all that it could be, perhaps through a lack of focus on professional development. The continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers was identified as a key element in ensuring quality in educational systems. It was seen as important for teachers to recognize that CPD is a prerequisite of their professional careers and as part of the battle against ignorance and poverty. It was recognized, also, that the Commonwealth has a key role to play in supporting this.

It was considered that developing, promoting and sustaining a reading culture was an essential element in achieving a learning culture. However, considerable challenges are faced by many learners in gaining access to written material. The lack of mother tongue learning material was discussed and seen as a problem. Participants agreed that mother tongue teaching and learning materials must be addressed by Ministries of Education, teachers' organisations and civil society groups involved in teaching and learning.

The issue of comparability of qualifications was seen as being a central feature of quality education. With many countries moving towards the development of qualifications frameworks, participants affirmed that quality through qualifications needs, urgently, to be addressed.

Participants drew attention to the problems of quality not only in schooling but also at levels of higher education. With tutor/student ratios at times standing as high as 1:1000 the challenges faced by lecturers were recognised as immense. It was suggested that the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) should be asked to address this issue.

An issue which was discussed in greater detail elsewhere in the Conference (see Chapter 4) involved the recruitment of teachers. In this session, participants argued that recruitment agencies must be properly regulated and that a Code of Practice should be developed. This would cover recruitment of teachers



Attending the Roundtable session, Kgomotso Motlotle, Secretary-General Botswana UNESCO National Commission

across the Commonwealth and would take into account the recruitment, management and in-country support for teachers.

There was general agreement on leadership in education. It was noted that efforts should be directed at developing the leadership skills of head teachers/principals. Further, there should be mentoring/nurturing programmes for teachers who show outstanding leadership qualities. It was seen as useful for principals/head teachers to meet regularly to share experience, knowledge and expertise and to work with those aiming to achieve leadership positions within education.

Recommendations:

1. The ACU should address the issue of quality in higher education, especially possibilities to reduce large class sizes.
2. Ministers of Education should work with civil society groups and NGOs to develop mother tongue reading materials for schools.
3. Ministers of Education should ensure that wherever possible teachers' organizations are included in decision-making and come to be seen as part of 'solutions' to educational problems.
4. Ministries of Education should support mentoring schemes for those teachers who exhibit leadership qualities.

4. Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances

In this Roundtable session, participants discussed educational options for countries and communities affected by natural disasters, wars, civil strife and conflict. In these, as in all other Commonwealth countries, it was generally agreed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO Convention, the Dakar Framework for Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child should form the basis of all educational policy and practice.

Such measures were seen as especially important because in countries at war and experiencing natural disasters, children receive little, if any, schooling and often educational systems collapse. As countries emerge from crisis, issues of human rights, respect for dignity and tolerance of difference need to be given prominence in the curriculum.

Similarly, conflict management could be a feature of the education of young people and adults in countries affected by war and civil strife. Teachers in these countries need to be helped to develop the knowledge and skills to deliver a curriculum which deals effectively with human rights and citizenship education. Too often teachers are deterred from staying in communities undergoing conflict or natural disasters, thereby depriving children of access to education. Participants suggested that some form of intervention is required to attract and retain teachers in areas of difficulty. These could be financial subsidies or other forms of physical support.

It was agreed that regional meetings to bring together representatives from education, labour and finance could meaningfully address issues of child labour and poverty. In many cases, action at the local level has been the most effective means of mitigating or overcoming difficult circumstances. Participants heard of the success of many NGOs in implementing locally-based projects to help create strong learning communities to provide education. It was suggested that governments need to work more effectively with local communities and civil society organisations to support and empower their attempts to overcome difficult circumstances.

Discussion also focused upon the importance of knowledge-sharing systems to provide information about 'good practices' and 'what works' when trying to provide education in difficult circumstances.

Information on the provision of accommodation, free clothing, food for families, bicycles for children where transportation is an issue, could all prove helpful. Information about schools 'adopting' a whole family and providing employment for parents as well as education for children has worked elsewhere in the world, notably in South America.

These knowledge-sharing systems should include facilitation, networking, discussion and contacts and be available physically and virtually. Indeed, virtual learning – through open and distance technology – was seen as important for communities undergoing conflict or natural disasters. Already there is widespread use of open and distance learning (ODL) throughout the Commonwealth (see ODL section in this chapter and section on the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in Chapter 5). ODL is being used to overcome a wide range of difficult circumstances such as shortages of schools, shortages of qualified teachers, limited funds for scholarships, as well as limited access to specialist vocational courses.

The session concluded with examples of 'what works', including stories from India where a mid-day meal for children has helped retention rates and from Bangladesh where street children have been involved in the making of TV programmes and thereby have gained much self-esteem and useful skills. So although supporting education in difficult circumstances is not easy, the session showed that it is far from impossible.

Recommendations:

1. Governments should work more effectively with local communities and civil society organisations to support and empower their attempts to overcome difficult circumstances.
2. Ministries should identify interventions to attract and retain teachers in areas of difficulty.
3. The Commonwealth should establish knowledge-sharing systems to provide examples of 'what works' and 'good practices'. These systems should include facilitating, networking and discussions: contacts should be available physically and virtually.
4. The Commonwealth should establish a tri-lateral approach through regional meetings to bring together people from finance, labour and education: these meetings should address issues of child labour and poverty.

5. Using Open and Distance Learning to Overcome Barriers

Participants at this session agreed that Open and Distance Learning (ODL) will be a major medium for the delivery of education in the future. Already, ODL is integral to enhancing access and ensuring inclusion, as well as addressing equality of opportunity, especially for people in isolated and poorly serviced areas. However, because many Commonwealth citizens live in areas without electricity, it was suggested that there is a need to investigate ways of getting 'education products' to people in these isolated areas without the use of costly technology.

Although Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is very important to ODL, it is very expensive to administer. Ministers could investigate ways to reduce costs, especially as there is a wealth of evidence that ODL can make a substantial contribution not only to social justice but also to achievement.

Speakers noted that making education a tradeable commodity raises issues for some countries where education is seen as a nation-building instrument and the embodiment of culture. The question developed as to whether it is possible to have both trade and cultural ambitions addressed in the same education policy initiative. Further discussion drew attention to the fact that ODL is likely to emerge as a major form of delivery in an emergent General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS) environment. Yet it was noted, there is widespread ignorance about the implications of GATS for education even among key stakeholders, such as universities. Given that situation, Ministers and Parallel Symposium delegates suggested that debate is needed, indeed, is overdue. They noted that very little data exists on the scale and nature of trans-national education: the result is that trade negotiations under GATS are rarely informed by perspectives from educators. It became apparent that Ministers of Education and Ministers of Trade need to be sitting at the same table.

Whilst much of the discussion focused on learners, participants recognised that teachers are critical in giving structure to on-line courses: content alone is not sufficient. It was agreed that ODL cannot be successful without a proper strategy in place for the training of professionals who are involved in the delivery of ODL. In addition, participants suggested developing a repository of education which would contain 'lessons in best practices' and 'learning objects', all of which would be widely available.

However, it was noted that Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are a concern when it comes to the dissemination of 'knowledge products' throughout the Commonwealth. Speakers asked 'how can we meet the IPRs of the owners of education products but also acknowledge the importance of making education available as widely as possible?' In discussion, it was agreed that there is a need to see if IPR laws can be harmonised across the Commonwealth thereby reducing potential tensions over copyrights.

Generally, it was seen that ODL raises many questions about copyright. However whilst there is agreement that copyright rules need to be fair, clear and easily understood, three very different perspectives have emerged:

1. The USERS – who want an updated copyright law with exceptions that permit them to use copyright material without asking for permission or paying royalties.
2. The COPYRIGHT OWNERS/CREATORS – who oppose exceptions and amendments to the legislation and want users to ask for permission and pay royalties i.e. basically retain the status quo.
3. The GOVERNMENT – who set the legislation and are trying to balance the needs of users and creators/copyright owners.

The debate focused upon two themes:

- What should be the 'free' part (covered by exception and which allows free access)
- What should be the 'fee' part (not covered by exception and that one has to pay for).

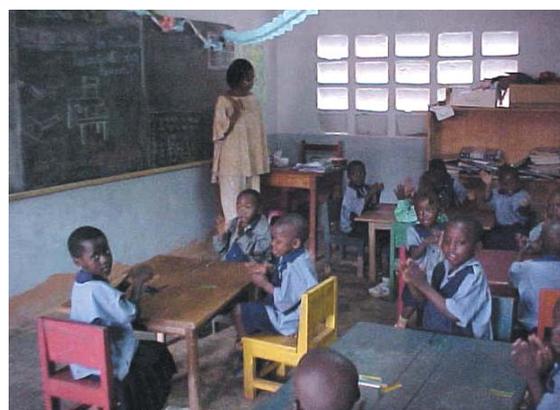
Ministers were seen to have four choices:

1. Wait and see what happens elsewhere in the field of ODL;
2. Initiate an internal consultation round/legislation committee through Commonwealth channels;
3. Introduce amendments to the copyright law spelling out the exception;
4. Introduce a licensing regime.

Although discussion did not result in one of these being accepted, there was general agreement that on the grounds of access, inclusion and achievement ODL should continue to be developed in Commonwealth countries.

Recommendations:

1. In making ODL policy, Ministers should consider strategies for delivery, how to invest in professional development and engage in possible public/private partnerships.
2. Ministers should involve other government departments, not just education, in promoting ODL and vocational education generally.
3. Because trade negotiations under GATS are rarely informed by perspectives from educators, Ministers of Education and Ministers of Trade need to consult with each other on matters of education.



Young children in class in Swaziland

6. Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education Systems

Participants at this session heard that education for all would not be achieved without tackling HIV/AIDS, and, at the same time, HIV/AIDS could only be tackled with robust education systems: the two were seen as being interdependent.

By far the most important issue addressed was of teachers infected with HIV/AIDS. It was argued that the resource of infected teachers must be retained in education and supported. This could be through making treatment and counseling available.

Teachers should be given help in the form of learning resources and training to cope with and develop new knowledge and skills to deliver HIV/AIDS-related education. This should happen at both pre-service and in-service stages. Further, it was suggested, more countries should consider the practice of using a pool of relief or substitute teachers.

In addition, speakers noted the importance of developing courses on HIV/AIDS for teachers and for children. Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into the curriculum at all stages would be a first step. Education about HIV/AIDS should start at early childhood years and should systematically involve parents. "Education to provide knowledge about HIV/AIDS is not enough: the curriculum needs to embrace a wider range of life skills, so that young people themselves need to be involved in developing reproductive health programmes", said one participant. It was argued that it is vital to retain children affected by HIV/AIDS in education and thereby to address and reduce their vulnerability and risk. This requires multiple support attached to schools and removal of cost and other barriers, e.g. through provision of childcare, nutrition and vocational training.

Education programmes should be reviewed to ensure they promote behaviour change, through experiential tools, providing a 'human face', peer education, as well as developing a range of learning resources such as radio, television and video. Also, participants agreed that the internet could be exploited in providing HIV/AIDS education to young people, adult communities, teachers and health-care workers.

It was suggested that all Commonwealth countries should develop legislation to eliminate the stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS in society generally and in education in particular. There should be clear political commitment to tackle HIV/AIDS and mitigate its impact. Countries need to undertake statistical studies to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on the supply of and demand for teachers. These studies should take account of the impact of HIV/AIDS on school enrolments. This should be supported by monitoring systems to ensure programmes deliver.

The discussion noted that a multi-sectoral response is required in which Ministries of Education can and should play a part. The Commonwealth should help achieve this.

It should be part of the mission of universities to consider how their research and development resources can be brought to bear on strategies for both mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS and on preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. A Student Handbook on HIV/AIDS being produced by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat, was welcomed.

Commonwealth countries have much to learn from one-another by transfer of information, knowledge, experience and expertise. However, in this transfer, account needs to be taken of cultural differences as

well as efficient use of resources. Attention needs to be given to forging partnerships between governments Ministries, NGOs, community-based organisations and

the private sector. Participants agreed that these partnerships should work at both national and trans-national levels.

Recommendations:

1. There should be renewed political commitment to tackle HIV/AIDS and to mitigate its impact.
2. A multi-sectoral response is required, of which Education Ministries can and should play a key part. The Commonwealth Secretariat and other organisations should help achieve this.
3. It is vital to retain children affected by HIV/AIDS in education in order to address and reduce their vulnerability and risk. This requires multiple support attached to schools and removal of cost and other barriers, e.g. through provision of childcare, nutrition, bursaries and grants and vocational training.
4. Education programmes should be reviewed to ensure they promote behaviour change, through appropriate life skills tools.

CHAPTER FOUR

Teacher Protocol

Teachers Recruitment, Retention and Development Issues

Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon welcomed Ministers to the session. Hon Ivan Lewis (UK Minister for Vocational Skills) opened the discussion, indicating that recruitment, retention and continuous development of teachers are all essential for maintaining the integrity of education systems throughout the Commonwealth. He recognized that there were many problems in various Commonwealth countries and, as a consequence, member countries were addressing these issues in different ways.

The following provides a full account of the discussion at Session Seven. Unlike the other chapters, it is almost a verbatim presentation: this is to assist ministers and others as they work towards the Protocol.

Summary

There is a need for properly organised and arranged procedures enabling teachers to move between different Commonwealth countries. Such procedures must be based on the principles of mutuality, equity, transparency and fairness. The Commonwealth was recognised as a suitable mechanism to address the global challenge of teacher recruitment, retention and development. It was noted that un-regulated recruitment of teachers puts teachers at risk and endangers education systems in many Commonwealth countries. This, it was seen, will thwart their efforts to achieve the MDG targets.

Proceedings

Deputy Secretary-General Mr Winston Cox commenced discussion by drawing attention to the Commonwealth as a mechanism for addressing the global problem of teachers' recruitment, retention and development. He noted that the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) had established the idea of a Working Group to take forward the possibility of a Commonwealth Protocol.

In supporting the initiative discussed at the SOM, Ministers were asked to address:

- The time-frame for a Working Group.
- The Terms of Reference for the Working Group.
- Other specific issues which Ministers may wish to have included.

He also drew attention to the fact that Ministers of Health had adopted the Commonwealth Health Code of Practice in Geneva in May 2003. This document is available on the Commonwealth Secretariat website and is commended to the Working Group on Teacher Recruitment.

Hon Mario Michel (St Lucia): noted that he had been asked to make a short presentation to the debate on teacher recruitment. He stated that this initiative followed the convening of a meeting in July 2002 in Barbados, from which came the Savannah Accord. It called upon MOEs of the 32 Small States of the Commonwealth to draft a protocol on Commonwealth teacher recruitment and to conduct a pan-Commonwealth study on teacher loss.

“These activities have been implemented and the pan-Commonwealth research undertaken. Also the draft of the Protocol was approved at the Seychelles meeting held in March of this year.

“The Protocol recognises that quality and effectiveness in education can be measured by the pivotal role played by teachers. A World Bank report has recognised that teachers have a profound impact on education systems.

“Recruitment agencies have been contracted by schools to undertake teacher recruitment on their behalf. Reports of teachers testify to the abuses carried out by these recruitment agencies. Among other matters the purpose of the protocol is to provide ethical recruiting practices for businesses involved in recruiting teachers.”

In summary, Mr Michel noted: “we do not wish our teachers to be recruited by developed countries. In my own country 75% of the education budget is utilised for teacher remuneration. We cannot compete with developed countries which are able to offer our teachers higher salaries. We cannot expect our teachers to remain in their countries. We expect developed countries to compensate us. We believe this position to be fair, reasonable and logical. We urge it upon all countries.”

Hon Reginald Farley (Barbados): supported St Lucia's position. "Barbados continues to lose teachers in the areas of science, mathematics and geography. When people are recruited without our knowledge we have not been afforded the opportunity to plan or to accommodate for that loss. We ask that we are given the ability to plan. We have invested considerable funds in the training of these persons. Most people access their training through the government of Barbados. It is a brain drain and we feel that we ought to get something in return."

Steve Sinnot (of the Commonwealth Teachers Grouping also Deputy Secretary General of the NUT of England and Wales): indicated he was also in Botswana in 1997 when Ministers pointed out how many of them had been teachers, at one time.

He realised Ministers feel strongly about this issue and drew attention to a letter received from a teacher recruited from India:

"Here I am: A life of hunger; Landed here from a poor family. Although this has been a good teaching experience, I am sitting and weeping in hunger and feeling sick."

Mr Sinnot said that no one could wish to respond without compassion to that statement. "I have never come across a case of such gross exploitation. By stopping work permits being granted for that kind of recruitment in the UK, unethical practices have been terminated. But there is a need for properly organised and arranged procedures which enable teachers to move between different Commonwealth countries. Also procedures should be developed to enable the creation of development assistance programmes to education so that all countries in the Commonwealth benefit.

"When developing countries are targeted to provide teachers this cannot be defended. Vulnerable economies and education systems are striving to meet the 2015 objectives. It cannot be defended that teaching forces are targeted."

Mr Sinnot referred to the significant and special problems of Small States. He referred colleagues to a statement drafted from the Consortium for Commonwealth Education, which took account of the interests and concerns of developed and developing countries. It noted the importance of the principles of mutuality, equity, transparency and fairness.

He concluded by noting that Commonwealth teachers will welcome any work to re-cast the Protocol. "Working together we can find opportunities for everyone to be a winner – although we must remember that children must be the real winners."

Hon Peter Peacock (Scotland): supported the view that recruitment and retention of teachers is critical to all education systems. He noted that the United Kingdom took different approaches in each of the four countries.

The Minister noted, "there is general interest in the population about being a teacher. There are subject shortages in Maths and Science. All of us are looking for new and different strategies to attract teachers into the profession. We introduced, in my part of Scotland, a distance learning mechanism to enable professional development and teacher training. Some teachers are coming from different professional backgrounds. We have made our salaries competitive as part of the domestic challenge.

"We have re-modelled how we take students out of universities. We guarantee teaching places to all graduates within the first three years after graduation. We are reviewing our teacher education process as part of the continued development of teachers. We have introduced a chartered teachers' programme enabling teachers to make more income by offering them continued professional development. We are starting to remove the administrative problems of teaching, allowing them to concentrate on their professional tasks.

"Local recruitment of teachers has improved. It is now much more attractive to be a teacher. The Scottish Executive does not employ teachers nor does a recruitment agency recruit teachers. Small numbers are recruited from other countries. We are very focussed on trying to meet our own needs in our own community. We are trying to minimise the impact beyond Scotland. For all these reasons Scotland supports the Working Group initiative."

Hon Kadar Asmal (South Africa): "If one looks at the document summary, 4,702 teachers were recruited from South Africa between 2002 and 2003. Black South African teachers are recruited to the cities. White teachers are sent to the counties. The problem not only concerns small countries but also large countries. We believe that the teachers' unions have a role in this discussion.

"We are in agreement with St. Lucia in the establishment of a Working Group. A code of practice, a Protocol, could only be addressed and agreed in a Ministerial Meeting. If we wait until the next CCEM, it would not be possible to act on a Protocol for a considerable amount of time.

"Many of the smaller countries have asked that we do not wait for three years for this matter to be addressed. What are the intermediate strategies so that we do not wait three years? In offering to support this Code of

Conduct, South Africa will be pleased to serve on the Working Group.

“Many of us do not believe that the Geneva rules are enough. I did not know that in the UK teachers’ salaries are tax exempt. Governments are directly involved in this process. There is a right to mobility and there is an assumption that the State should not interfere in that right. But immigration laws grow hot and then cold and some teachers are asked to return to their home countries when their term of service ends. Others get invited to remain. I have heard that the recruitment of teachers could be part of the WTO rules on trades and services. We must make clear that the WTO rules have no relationship to the recruitment of teachers.”

Hon Maxine Henry Wilson (Jamaica): told the meeting that when the head-hunters appear in Jamaica, their actions are clandestine. As Minister of Education, she thought that the teaching cohort was settled for the academic year. But teachers were recruited without the knowledge of the Ministry. “There has to be some kind of adherence to a principle, so that people who are recruited are made known to us. You lose your best teachers. The average teachers have between five and ten years of experience. It cannot be correct that they are taken away. We need to work on timing and have a record of who is recruiting whom.

“We are now counterpoising retention as against recruitment. The truth of the matter is we cannot ever compete with developed countries. We increased our teachers salaries by 25-80%. Yet we end up using 95% of the education budget on teachers. We cannot speak about competitive salaries. It is a vicious circle, we will never be able to make it more attractive if you continue to take away our teachers.

“You have a shortage in London of around 2,500 teachers and because of the demographic profile this will increase. Since you need them and we need them, let us satisfy both of our requirements.”

Hon Louis Steven Obegadoo (Mauritius): “We cannot retain our teachers, and most of them are the best trained and the most skilled. Obviously having to train new categories of persons presupposes a major loss. All countries facing this problem will tell you that this does not guarantee a sound basis for our students’ futures.

“We realise that this is a problem affecting a number of countries. We need to do something. We cannot afford to wait for three years. We want concrete action from a Working Group of which Mauritius wishes to be a part. We wish this to be done before the end of 2004. It must be reviewed by a Ministerial action group.

We need to have something concrete by the end of 2004.”

Hon Fiame Naomi Mata’Afa (Samoa): “I refer you to the documentation sent to us. The genesis of this issue began in the Caribbean and to be true to that preparation we have to follow this through.

“Ultimately this is affecting all of our education systems. The problem imposed by our teachers and their mobility is affecting all of us.”

Hon Danny Rollen Faure (Seychelles): “The issue is an urgent one and the DSG could chair that Working Group. We should use a formula that was agreed upon by COL when we were discussing the Virtual University for the Small States. Ministers should be drawn from all regions – African, Caribbean, European, Pacific and Indian Oceans.”

Hon Micheal Laimo (Papua New Guinea): “I too have concern about the subject of recruitment and retention of teachers. Each government should provide an incentive to retain teachers. If we do not provide salaries we will lose the teachers. Teachers are professionals and each government must act to retain them.”

Hon Jake Ootes (Canada): “Canadian perspectives are like all others: we are attempting to prepare effective teachers. More data and resources are needed across Canada. This will ensure that we continue to provide information on teacher preparation to all our Commonwealth colleagues. Indeed, CIDA and Canadian teachers’ professional groups work with their colleagues in most Commonwealth countries.

“We understand the difficulty that many countries are facing. Canada supports the proposal that a working committee be set up to examine all the ramifications of education systems. Appropriate time frames must be established and mechanisms developed whereby all Commonwealth countries can contribute.”

Hon Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta (The Gambia): “For those of us who have been here longer, we have a sense of frustration. Talking about closing the gap... how do we begin to deliver and achieve the level playing field? We turn a blind eye to the violation of certain rights. There are unethical things happening which continue to cause and maintain this divide. I think that the end of 2004 is a very long way off. Let us not go through all these procedural arrangements that never end. Where are the teachers to make 2005 happen? The root of the problem may be found in some of the regulations. Where are the voices of Ministers of Education at trade meetings and meetings of Finance Ministers? The multilateral Ministers must be brought together. Let us talk about some kind of roundtable

and let them see the injustices. We are only seeing the tip of the iceberg. Professor Sen has left us with a lot to read between the lines. Unless we act now we will never close the gap.”

Hon Roy Bodden – British Overseas Territories

(Cayman): “Cognisance must be taken about engaging the interest of the United States as it is from that area that much of the poaching takes place. The city of New York is among the biggest recruiters. We will need the support of the developed countries of the Commonwealth to address the issue of the United States in the recruitment processes. They are the greatest poachers.”

Hon Paula A Cox – British Overseas Territories

(Bermuda): “We could exploit the possibility that teachers might be able to move into the private sector. Could this be part of the terms of reference? In terms of retention and development issues, Bermuda would hope to gain, and explore how people can move from one sector of the economy to another.”

Hon Trevor Mallard (New Zealand): “We have suffered acute loss of teachers over the last five years, but there has been a reversal in the last two years. We got New Zealand’s teachers to come back because of paying them. Now I have a good group of teachers who are making a resounding contribution to the school system.

“Can I make comments on the one part that there has not been enthusiastic discussion on? The Commonwealth is exceptionally poor at sharing good practice in this area. I have been sharing with Ministerial colleagues the good things that we have been doing to professionally develop teachers. I have been sharing some research that has surprised me on the difference that individual teachers make to the classroom. Socio-economic differences in schooling can be reduced by good teaching. The evidence is that we can make a difference.”

Hon Nahas Angula (Namibia): “I am a teacher on sabbatical as a Minister! If you are employed by somebody you are supposed to give notice. I will give one month’s notice. I think there is something wrong somewhere and that is why teachers abscond. Teachers are paid by public money and are employed by public agencies. How can a public agency be involved in the process of absconding teachers? Commonwealth governments must adopt the principle that when you are recruiting teachers, this must have recognition by the government. This is so that the other government knows what is happening. This will also protect the teacher from exploitation. I need teachers in Namibia.”

Hon Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu (Ghana): “All these issues are very critical. You have to tell us about the South African situation. Ghana may lose its teachers to South Africa. We have made it our responsibility to achieve results here and now. We expect something from this meeting.”

Hon Teima Onorio (Kiribati): “We have the problem of retaining our teachers at secondary level. They leave the profession for other jobs. We are finding it difficult to find replacements for these teachers. At the primary level we have teacher shortages because of resource constraints. We are embarking with our government on this problem.

“We are concerned about promoting the gender balance. Mainly females are attracted to teaching. We would welcome information from countries about motivating males to join the teaching profession. In terms of our salaries, our teachers are well considered in our education budget, although we are conducting a review of our teachers’ benefits. Kiribati supports the initiative to encourage the inclusion of different groups around the Commonwealth, by communicating at Ministerial level toward promoting the status of teachers.”

Hon Dr Murli Manohar Joshi (India): Indicated that the movement of teachers is not different to the recruitment of professionals in various other sectors. “This is not something which I foresee we can have an ideal solution. I would like to suggest that a regulatory framework be considered so that people are not taken by surprise.”

Hon Prof Fabian Ngozichukwu Chinedum Osuji

(Nigeria): “The issue of recruitment and retention of teachers is important to all Nigerians. There has to be a regulatory framework and we support the view from India. Nigeria is interested in the Working Group.”

Hon Hazel Manning (Trinidad and Tobago): “I would like to underscore this issue. For Trinidad and Tobago, we have stemmed the flow by completing a job evaluation exercise and keeping salaries at certain rates. Quality teachers – especially in English language and mathematics – were emigrating. But our policies have stemmed the tide of teacher outflow. Nevertheless, Trinidad would be pleased to be part of the Working Group.”

Hon Ivan Lewis (United Kingdom): “We can all see the importance of the issue of teachers at risk. It is a world wide problem – it is not about poaching but a complex problem and UK supports the proposal for a Working Group. Careful work and thought are required. The UK would be pleased to take part in a Working Group.”

Conclusions and the way forward

DSG (Mr Winston Cox) said that the quality of the discussion has been extremely rich. He noted that “you may be interested to learn that colleagues in the economic affairs division have been looking at trade issues and have asked for further work to be done. They reached the conclusion that the financial flows involved in the movement of persons could be four times as much as those by goods.”

He noted that recently the Secretariat had hosted a meeting for a number of NGOs to discuss education as a service and how education fits into GATS. “As education officials, you must all pay attention to these important issues about GATS. Recruitment is just one issue and is only the tip of an iceberg of global proportions.

“The Commonwealth is becoming a key player in addressing teacher recruitment, mobility and retention. I am happy to say that the Commonwealth is well-placed to play a leading role in resolving global issues. The work done so far – in health for example – has attracted the attention of WHO and other groups. We have been able to provide certain levels of leadership.

“I would anticipate that Ministers seek to capture the concerns that Bermuda’s question invited. Recruitment, Retention and Development should be the focus of the Working Group. Specific documents have been prepared and more work must be done until the final document can be put out. We hope that Ministers will make use of the background information provided.

“We have identified a practice from the Finance Ministers’ meetings, to kick off the discussion from Small States and from industrialised countries; the debate will enable us to craft the Terms of Reference.

“Regarding the timeframe: there are ways and means of ensuring Ministerial support and approval. If Ministers find it necessary to meet, we will meet. I am the servant to Ministers. We may err on the side of urgency rather than delay. Regarding the size of the Working Group, we seek not to limit and would urge you to reach around 10 members. If there are more who wish to participate, that we will not fight!”

Recommendations and Agreements:

- The formation of a Working Group to examine teacher recruitment.
- The Working Group should be Chaired by DSG (Mr Winston Cox).
- The Working Group comprises senior officials from any interested country.
- Senior officials will submit an interim report on their work by April 2004.
- This will be followed by a final consultation of Ministers by the end of September 2004.
- Trade unions and civil and professional associations will be invited to participate.
- Membership was agreed: Barbados, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, St Lucia, Seychelles, South Africa, UK and Zambia.
- Permanent Observers were agreed: The Commonwealth Teachers’ Grouping, the Consortium for Education in the Commonwealth, the University of Nottingham Centre for International Research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Commonwealth and International Organisations

There are a number of Commonwealth organisations dedicated to education. The Secretariat's Education Section responds to Ministerial mandates as does the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) although its focus is specifically on scholarships. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) was established in 1987 following the CHOGM held in Vancouver. The presentation by COL of its work and plans also addressed a Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth. A new and welcome addition to the family of Commonwealth education is the Commonwealth Institute/Centre for Commonwealth Education (CI/CCE). This body is being established following its move from London to Cambridge. It will serve the Commonwealth well and its presentation by the Chief Executive, Judith Hanratty was welcomed. Finally presentations were made by the World Bank and by the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) which focuses upon funds for the 17 Commonwealth countries of Africa and Asia.

Commonwealth Secretariat

A presentation was made on behalf of the Education Section by Nancy Spence, Director of the Social Transformation Programmes Division. She noted that the work of the Education Section has been re-shaped since the last Ministers' Meeting in Halifax.

Drawing attention to the acceptance of a new corporate strategy for the Secretariat by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2002, she said that this commits the Secretariat's future work plans to addressing the MDGs.

"So it follows that our Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD), now embracing Education, Gender and Health is mandated to address poverty reduction through helping to meet these Goals. In relation to Education, these are to support the achieving of universal primary education and to work to reduce gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

"We see a new role emerging from this new focus and new structure and also an opportunity to assist you, Ministers of Education. Drawing upon our comparative advantage of over 40 years of working with Commonwealth education institutions and Ministries of Education, we are developing a three-fold approach to assistance. We see this as an ABC role – Advocacy, Brokering and being a Catalyst."

A. Advocacy – to promote education as a key priority in all Commonwealth agendas

- As advocates we will work to promote the importance of education in all Commonwealth fora.
- Drawing from the advantage that we feel we have, we will facilitate the sharing of knowledge with

Ministries of Education to keep them up to date on latest issues, and trends, related to MDGs;

- In this way we will improve our communications network to better promote and publicise innovative examples of educational practice to you, Ministers of Education on a regular basis. A dedicated staff person will be invested with this role.

We feel proud of the fact that in a time of declining resources, we have not lost any education staff. With a focused staff of 8, 6 at the programme level, we feel that this work plan can achieve maximum effectiveness within such a focused framework.

B. Brokering – to facilitate the matching of needs to resources

As brokers, the Education staff can help in three ways:

To co-ordinate the matching of mandates and needs to the broader set of Commonwealth resource capacity that exists. You will be learning in this meeting of the work we are doing to ensure an Action Plan is delivered. The Plan draws upon this wider set of Commonwealth resources to take up on Ministerial mandates.

Secondly the Education section will call upon our own Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation to assist the needs of Ministries of Education.

Finally we will develop more collaborative partnerships. We are about to renew and deepen our commitment to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). We will further these collaborations with COL, the new Commonwealth Centre for Education (CI/CCE), the Consortium for Commonwealth Education and the UNESCO high level group for EFA and many others.

C. Catalyst – to share best practice to stimulate faster and wider replication across the Commonwealth.

And lastly as Catalysts, we feel we are in a privileged and strategic position to be able to:

- Gather and share evidence-based best practices from across Commonwealth countries related to the attainment of educational goals of the MDGs.
- Through the promotion of pan-Commonwealth workshops and publications, to share best practices and thereby help demonstrate innovative projects for national and regional replication in supporting universal primary education and the elimination of gender disparities.

All our commitments to work in these ABC roles are subject to the elaboration of a four year strategic plan that will be developed for the Secretariat as a whole and approved by our Governing Boards. But we do not see our framework changing dramatically over the next four years.”

The Strategic Work Plan for 2003-2004

Specific activities

Under UPE as a portal, the following four activities are proposed:

- Hosting a pan Commonwealth Best Practices workshop on strategies and policies for achieving UPE to learn from each other about what works best and develop this into a publication for the year 2005.
- Managing of a Working Group to further teacher mobility issues for quality education.
- Develop citizenship education curricula in conflict related areas (Sri Lanka and Pacific) in partnership with the Gender Section.

- Articulate a pan-Commonwealth policy response on the critical impact of HIV/AIDS on pupils' education (specifically orphans) in HIV/AIDS-prevalent Commonwealth countries.

Under the portal of Reducing Gender Disparities in Primary and Secondary Education, the following three broad areas are proposed:

- A pan Commonwealth workshop on best practices related to girls' access and retention issues – facilitated by key Commonwealth partners such as FAWE and others in Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean.
- A publication in the ongoing series of Gender mainstreaming for which the Secretariat is well known, but addressing education policies in particular.
- Address the emerging area of male under-achievement.

Conclusion

With this new focus, new structures and the new ABC role, the Education Section stands ready to assist in a more focused way in helping countries meet the Commonwealth targets related to the Millennium Development Goals.



Commonwealth Secretariat staff working at the sessions

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

Professor Trudy Harpham, Chair of the CSFP introduced Dr John Kirkland (General-Secretary ACU) who gave a presentation on behalf of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). He noted that the mandate from the previous CCEM, at Halifax, had been to facilitate more awards, involve more countries in the Scholarship Plan and encourage more diversity in provision. In addition, the CSFP had been asked to develop a website and generate a tracer study of where Commonwealth Scholarship alumni can be found. He noted that no longer was the CSFP in decline. Far from it: he was delighted to be able to report the following good news:

- there are now more awards – from 421 in 2000 to 579 – that being the highest figure since 1995.
- More countries to host scholarships – from 7 in 2000 to 13, nearly now at the target of 14 countries.

The number of countries hosting awards has increased – although the UK remains the main contributor, it has been joined by Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius and South Africa. Cameroon and Ghana offer awards.

“At Halifax we were set an objective of 14 countries (from an existing seven), we now have 13 countries, so we are nearly there!”

Malta then announced a scholarship and became the 14th country to offer scholarships.

- More diversity in provision – greater range of needs, for example, short term professional fellowships:

“Regarding Diversity objectives: at Halifax we were asked to move from CSFP traditional awards and increase the diversity through Distance Learning awards, in Canada and UK, and short term professional fellowships. We were asked to explore split site PhDs also.”

- Website:

“There is an effective website which is up and running and used extensively. It has encouraged people to go to the country page and see what is on the site for their country. The funding through DFID and FCO has been much appreciated.”

- Tracer study:

This will be developed further. In the tracer study publication, the Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, launched at this Conference and a copy given to each Minister, it was seen that of the 2000 alumni located, 100 are now Ministers, Permanent Secretaries or Vice Chancellors. Dr Kirkland noted that there is still some ‘tracing’

required and the CSFP wish to extend regular communications with former award holders. The CSFP, he added, also propose to divide alumni into professional groups and encourage regular email contacts with and between each group. This would provide a unique Commonwealth professional network.

In addition, Dr Kirkland noted that the proportion of female scholars is steadily increasing from 33% in the two previous recording periods to 45% currently. For fellows 30% are female. He noted that this is an encouraging development. General interest in the plan is high: 40,000 individuals applied for awards in 2002-3. Democratisation of the plan has worked. “People know of it and have applied for scholarships and fellowships.”

Dr Kirkland concluded by drawing attention to the fact that the past three years have seen immense support for the Plan. Nevertheless, challenges still remain. He said that with no central administration and management of the scheme many developments become impossible to undertake. The Scheme falls to the ACU in the UK to administer: but it may be that, in the future, another Commonwealth body may wish to act as the Secretariat of the Plan. Also, there are discussions on-going as to how the CSFP can harness further the status of alumni and thirdly how countries and alumni can contribute to the scheme.

Commonwealth Education Fund

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) promotes Basic Education throughout the Commonwealth by:

- Supporting the Strengthening of civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans and frameworks especially through support to national coalitions and alliances.

What do we contribute?

- Enabling local communities to monitor government spending on education both at national and local levels.
- Supporting innovative ways for civil society to ensure that all children, especially girls and the most vulnerable, are able to access quality education.

How are we resourced?

- Initial £10million was from the UK government.
- A UK Treasury Committee established the Fund to match pound for pound a further £10million, raised by March 2004, making the fund worth, potentially, £30million.

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Recommendations:

1. The CEF strengthen the relationship between Ministries of Education and national CEF coordinators. Given that a majority of Commonwealth Countries are struggling with the challenge of poverty, and that there is a major difficulty in mobilising resources, the CEF could assist countries in mobilising additional funds.
2. Every national coalition should inform governments and other partners on its budget and work plan in a bid for information sharing, and to prevent any duplication of efforts.
3. Ministries of Education should understand the terms of reference of the NGOs in order to know what they are doing, so that roles are defined and synergies can be put in place.

Commonwealth of Learning

Mr. Lewis Perinbam, Chair of the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) was introduced to the meeting. He noted that he was honoured to have been invited to be Chairman of COL, made opening remarks and called upon the President and CEO of COL, Dr Gajaraj (Raj) Dhanarajan, to present COL's work.

Dr Raj Dhanarajan expressed his pleasure at having the opportunity to fulfil the mandatory requirement that COL report to Ministers on its performance since the last CCEM and seek their endorsement of, and commitment to finance, the Three-year Plan 2003-2006. As COL is the only Commonwealth agency funded on a voluntary as opposed to assessed basis, a formal indication of Ministers' commitments to provide the financing required to support the Plan is essential.

He emphasized that COL is committed to enable Commonwealth governments to provide equal and equitable access to education and training to all Commonwealth citizens.

The President thanked Ministers for their support and interest in the work of COL.

The President referred to the papers which COL had submitted for circulation to Ministers, notably the Summary Report 2000-2003, the Three Year Plan 2003-2006, and the Proposal for the Virtual University for Small States. He noted that, since its inception, COL's work has been supported by CAN\$80 million. At the time of COL's establishment some 300,000 Commonwealth citizens had been exposed to Open and Distance Learning; today that number is over three million.

He drew Ministers' attention to the Summary Report 2000-2003 that provides in greater detail a picture of COL work over the last three years. He then sketched some of the achievements during this period, mindful of the limited time available. He recalled the four roles that COL identified in the last Three Year Plan, namely a "Catalyst for Collaboration", a "Resource for Training", a "Capacity Builder", and an "Information and Knowledge Provider".

He then outlined a few of the achievements under each of these roles, in the first instance highlighting COL's success at stimulating regional collaboration in a number of areas, most notably in teacher development and the development of technical and vocational training, the former principally in Africa and the latter with a particular focus on the Pacific. To this end, COL has organized workshops and regional meetings and developed an on-line training programme for policy makers.

Dr Dhanarajan noted that the Commonwealth Education Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)'s work has contributed to closing the digital divide by encouraging the use of electronic media and ICTs for education and training in Asia. CEMCA, hosted on the campus of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), has undertaken training programmes, developed training materials, created and disseminated knowledge resources and provided advice and guidance on a responsive basis to institutions throughout Asia.

Singapore's National Institute of Education, as well as India's National Council for Educational Research and Training have together accommodated annually about 30 leaders of African teacher education institutions. These leaders have been exposed to latest developments in ICTs and institutional management as well as the opportunities afforded by ODL for teacher development.

Similarly, COL has collaborated with Abertay University in Dundee, Scotland and the Association of Commonwealth Universities to run professional development institutes for heads of African tertiary institutions. A key element from COL's perspective has been to acquaint those in single mode, i.e. conventional face-to-face institutions, with how they might better fulfil their mandate and meet the burgeoning demands for higher education, by becoming "dual mode", i.e. adding capacity to deliver their programmes at a distance.

Under COL's Media Empowerment (COLME) programme, and in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO), COL demonstrated how NGOs can use digital media production to address issues like the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. COL also reported on a programme funded by Britain that demonstrated how ICTs could effectively and appropriately be used in the training of literacy workers, the pilots having occurred in both India and Zambia. The programme was so successful that Zambia announced its intention to scale it up to the national level. Similarly, under COLME, training and digitalised production and editing facilities have been provided in every region of the Commonwealth for distinct purposes, including agricultural training, community development, non-formal education, and technical/vocational education and skills development. COL has collaborated with a wide variety of UN and international organisations like the Red Cross/Red Crescent Society, both to help them to capitalise on ODL for the training of their staff around the world, and to help them deliver their own training and information to those they are meant to serve around the globe.

At the 14CCEM in Halifax Governments agreed to a budget of CAN\$9m pa to support the Three Year Plan 2000 – 2003. Only partial success was achieved in

reaching this level of contributions. The major donor countries include Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, and the UK. COL is grateful for the other contributions it receives as well, especially from some of the smaller states with few resources that nonetheless manage to make annual contributions. In addition, many countries have contributed in-kind support or financed discrete initiatives. International financial organisations like the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have supported other initiatives, sometimes through contracts for specific work related to distance education and of benefit to the Commonwealth. All Commonwealth countries have access to COL materials electronically and most, if not all, have received printed materials designed to enrich their ability to provide access to education for all their citizens.

Having completed his brief summary of a few of the achievements in the 2000-2003 period, Dr Dhanarajan introduced Ministers to the Three Year Plan 2003-2006. He indicated that the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) informed the development of the plan, which is results driven and has been crafted with a view to results based management.

COL sees itself as being able to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs in a number of ways over the next three years. At the most fundamental level, societies need an education and training system capable of addressing their human resource needs if they are to be able to significantly reduce poverty. Given the burgeoning growth in the demand for learning at all levels, Open and Distance and Open Learning (ODL) must necessarily play a pivotal role in the future as conventional education alone simply cannot keep up.

The three programme areas on which COL will be focusing its efforts are:

- Policy development – support for the creation of policy and planning frameworks that are conducive to the use of ODL,
- Systems development – support for the creation of the competencies and systems necessary to underpin quality ODL programmes, and
- Applications – demonstrations of how ODL can be used effectively to address different learning priorities, with the focus being on teacher development, poverty reduction through rural and community development, health including especially HIV/AIDS, and other Commonwealth or MDG priorities.

Dr Dhanarajan mentioned that all three programmes would be supported by the knowledge/information function of COL. In addition to its regular range of information and knowledge resources, he indicated that COL is working to facilitate access through the web to a vast array of ODL materials, covering different topics – essentially creating a virtual library, equipped with specialised search facilities.

The President stated that his vision has always been to “reach the last person in the queue.” To meet this goal, it is clear that innovative means of delivering education, including the use of different technologies, must be used. He confirmed that Ministers have indicated their determination to ensure learning opportunities are provided to the last person and that technology is indeed useful in implementing educational strategies.

Ministers responded to these remarks by complimenting COL on its work as carried out under the last Three Year Plan 2000-2003 and endorsing the Three Year Plan 2003-2006 including its budget. A number of Ministers announced the contributions that their countries would be making towards the implementation of the Plan.

Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth Ministers at the 14th CCEM directed COL to undertake a study into the establishment of a Commonwealth Virtual University for Small States, building on existing institutions. COL presented the findings of the study to the 15th CCEM for Ministers consideration.

World Bank

An outline was presented by the World Bank which gave the background to the launching of the Fast Track Initiative. It was noted that Closing the Gap also entails addressing quality of learning environments. To achieve quality of education, clear challenges must be met with knowledge and understanding.

A decade ago it was difficult for countries to have a full understanding of the issues at stake. Today, the level of discussion has considerably increased. The demand for education has grown tremendously and Ministers of Education have a different status. Ten years ago Ministers of Education did not have the same strength and weight in government. Nowadays Ministers of Education are important figures. Political support for education is real.

It was noted that countries with good governance and good policies can get support from the World Bank. Resources therefore go to those countries with good leadership and good strategic frameworks. Currently 18 countries are participating in the Fast Track Initiative but discussions to open it up to all countries will be taking place soon.

www.worldbank.org

The way forward

The concept report on the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth developed by COL, with the assistance of a technical advisory committee, benefited from extensive consultations with the Ministers of Small States. It was overwhelmingly endorsed by the Ministers.

The Vision comprises:

- A Consortium of institutions
- Developing content for delivery
- Development and access of content data bases
- An online digitalised Repository of Learning Objects accessible by Small States which can also feed into it. (Several examples of learning object repositories exist currently).

It was noted that Virtual University offers opportunities both for expanded access to education and for educational

reform, positioning countries to take a quantum leap forward especially through the partnerships that would be forged.

Ministers agreed that :

- while the focus must be on the small states, benefits would also be derived by the larger states.
- the project would be nested in COL during the initial stages of its development.
- the funding required of CAN\$22m over 5 years is unlikely to be available from member states alone and would therefore require COL and the Commonwealth Secretary General to work together to secure the necessary resources.

Malta and India both indicated potential support for the initiative.

Commonwealth Institute/Centre for Commonwealth Education

The remit of the Commonwealth Institute is to advance education, right across the Commonwealth. The supervision of the activities of the Commonwealth Institute is delegated to Trustees who include the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, a number of the High Commissioners, some lay members and Judith Hanratty as an independent chairman. The Institute wishes to bring to life the values of the Commonwealth, particularly that of sharing. In order to fulfil its remit, the Institute is establishing a new body, the Centre for Commonwealth Education. The new Centre will be responsive to educational needs – primary and secondary – across all Commonwealth countries. The remit of CI/CCE is on primary and secondary education, and the training of teachers. These wishes reflect the needs of children, in both primary and secondary schools, in all Commonwealth countries. The decision was therefore taken by the Commonwealth Institute (representing all Commonwealth countries) to make a real link to the requirements of countries and establish this new Centre for Commonwealth Education. The countries will be setting up priorities.

The CI/CCE will focus on 3 areas:

1. Disseminate expertise – by developing collaborative programmes, by running courses in educational leadership and by providing opportunities for leaders to come to Cambridge.
2. A programme of research and scholarship which reflects and responds to the practical educational needs of Commonwealth countries.
3. Undertaking consultancy projects and the provision of research-led advice on those areas of specific concern and interest to Commonwealth governments.

In addition, the Centre will provide far-reaching network opportunities for all involved with education,

functioning as a life-long bank of information and contacts for both teachers and students.

The Centre will be a catalyst. It will bring people together and will create a system linking the education and teacher training institutions across the Commonwealth. It will seek out and transmit best practice. It will assist in the delivery of knowledge so as to deliver best practice in individual countries. It will seek to create partnerships with business and encourage an entrepreneurial approach to projects.

This cannot be done without links with other institutions throughout the Commonwealth. One of the many phenomena of globalisation is that with the proper organisational structure, knowledge flows more openly. CI/CEE will position itself as a key player as a catalyst for action.



Judith Hanratty, Chair Commonwealth Institute, the Hon Don McKinnon, the Secretary-General, Hon Peter Peacock, Minister of Education (Scotland) and Rozaimah Haji Abd Rahman, youth delegate at the session

Focus and delivery are two things the Centre will keep very clearly in mind. Progress requires much open sharing between Commonwealth education organisations. We will act as a catalyst, and will benefit from being at Cambridge where there is university work and research. Currently there are 40 post graduate education students from 35 countries of the Commonwealth at Cambridge, where there is an outstanding record in research.

- The Commonwealth Institute will link with the Ministries through the Advisory Board. It is in the process of appointing a Director and 2 deputy directors.

- Next year, the CI/CCE will establish a three year strategic plan.
- CI/CCE wishes to listen to Ministers and their needs, to give back to the Commonwealth some of the resources that have been given to the Commonwealth Institute.
- The Institute is seeking to link faculties and teacher training centres, to bring people in for shorter courses. It should do for education what the Harvard Business School has done for business: to become a strong research engine to multiply knowledge and best practice.

Report of Select Committee on CI/CCE by the Hon Prof Kadar Asmal

On behalf of the Select Committee which met yesterday to discuss the establishment of a Commonwealth Centre for Education, I am pleased to formally propose to you its approval by this Conference of Commonwealth Ministers. It is my considered view that the proposed Centre has the capacity to contribute towards the greater good of the education systems of Commonwealth countries, and this alone should make us approve it.

In doing so, I must advance some constructive comments, also made by the Select Committee. These relate to three areas: governance, funding, and purpose.

On the matter of governance, it is critical that the programme of the Centre be determined by the needs and interests of Commonwealth countries. This requires principles and practices of transparency and accountability, and democratic decision-making procedures. The Advisory Board must be able to define the agenda, and determine the issues on which research should be conducted. Similarly, we must ensure that Ministries of Education are directly involved; the routing of accountability through the Institute, and hence via High Commissioners and Departments of Foreign Affairs, perhaps needs to be reconsidered, and a more hands-on route devised.

As regards funding, there are some real questions about sustainable funding. In particular, countries need to know what contribution, if any, they will be required to make. We are advised that initial funding has been secured through the sale of the historical assets of the Institute, but this needs to be sustained, and greater clarity on the matter of financing will be needed.

The most important issue is that of focus. In the presentations, the Centre is proposed as a “focal point for an international network”, and not a hub which only radiates outwards from Cambridge. As such, it is critically important that the Centre makes connections with National Institutes for Education, in their various forms, and with higher education institutions

across the Commonwealth. In keeping with the spirit of inclusion, the document proposes that the Centre could “unleash the power” of the member states, and indeed it must draw on the capacity of all the people of the Commonwealth.

It is also important that the focus remains sharp, and that the areas of work are clearly demarcated from other institutions like the Commonwealth of Learning. I am not sure it is sufficient just to say that the Centre will work “in close collaboration with other Commonwealth institutions”. The Centre cannot be “everything to everyone”, and must define its niche areas. It must also be clear that it is not an inter-governmental forum, but a research and capacity building agency. There should be no political advocacy or agitation; there is no role for country comparisons or value judgements.

We should also accept that the role of the Centre should be modest to begin with. The proposed function of “providing advice to governments” must be done in a modest way, one which is supportive to member states.

I make these comments in an attempt to be constructive, and to see the Centre succeed. We must share expertise and best practice, and we must take on research which is of benefit to us all. If we can establish a Centre which will do this, then I believe it deserves our support, and I hope we can agree in principle with the establishment of the Centre for Commonwealth Education so that the hard work of dealing with some of the detailed planning can proceed.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary of Youth Summit Reports to Ministers

The 15CCEM saw another innovation – the Youth Summit. Held near the main Ministers’ meeting, two youths from each Commonwealth country spent three days in discussions on the themes and subthemes of the Conference. Time was made available in the programme for the Ministers to meet the youth delegates and the youth presentation at the final session was welcomed by Ministers. The following account summarises the discussion at the Youth Summit and comprises the presentation of the youth delegates to the Ministers.

The delegates expressed the beneficial experience of coming to ‘abroad’ and especially into a multicultural setting. They welcomed the opportunity of speaking with Ministers – and they spoke of the way their lives are being shaped by others. But the future is theirs. They suggested that Ministers must give them an opportunity to spread the word. There are huge gaps in gender. “We come from privileged schools and we want to see all children with our schools’ facilities.”

Mitigating the Effects of HIV/AIDS

The 15CCEM Education Youth Summit is concerned that:

The issue of HIV/AIDS education and awareness has not yet been properly addressed in all Commonwealth countries. There is a need for the leaders of the Commonwealth to publicly recognise that HIV/AIDS is one of the biggest crises facing the future of our nations. Lack of education concerning the factors that cause the spread of HIV/AIDS has resulted in numerous problems.

The Youth Summit recommends to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education that:

Ministers across the Commonwealth must act now to improve education on HIV/AIDS.

The Youth Summit believes that this can be achieved through the following actions:

1. Compulsory inclusion of HIV/AIDS education in the curriculum.
2. Train all teachers to teach this aspect of the curriculum.
3. Involve young people who have knowledge and/or experience of HIV/AIDS in this education programme.
4. Create HIV/AIDS Action Committees.

Universal Primary Education

The 15CCEM Education Youth Summit is concerned that:

The profile and benefits of education are not emphasised enough across the Commonwealth.

The Youth Summit recommends to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education that:

They place greater emphasis on raising the profile and benefits of education amongst the Commonwealth peoples.

The Youth Summit believes that this can be achieved through the following actions:

1. Develop and support youth councils and involve them directly in curriculum design and decision-making in education.
2. To create an international Commonwealth Education Day on which every school can raise the profile of education and raise resources to go into a central fund that can be used to help develop peer education in less fortunate schools.
3. Provide central access points in war-torn and rural areas to promote education to parents and children.
4. Encourage parents to return to education with incentives for them to stay in education.
5. Honour teachers more and promote them as important in and to society.



Youth Summit participants

Eliminating Gender Disparities in Education

The 15CCEM Education Youth Summit is concerned that:

Education Ministers publicly acknowledge the issue of female exclusion from education. Exclusion leads to young women becoming second class citizens in their own country.

The Youth Summit recommends to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education that:

Ministers make greater effort to improve access for girls and young women into education and make this access easier.

The Youth Summit believes that this can be achieved through the following actions:

1. Create Commonwealth partnerships to share good practices in dealing with gender issues in school across countries that share similar cultures.
2. Develop policies and strategies which create safe environments for girls in schools.
3. Set up community outreach programmes to promote the benefits of women receiving education.
4. Fund research to investigate the reasons for the exclusion of girls from education in different Commonwealth countries so that positive action which respects local culture can be identified.

The 15CCEM Education Youth Summit is concerned at the consistent underachievement and lack of motivation in education by boys in some Commonwealth countries. We are concerned about the long-term social consequences that will result.

The Youth Summit recommends to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education that:

Ministers put in place clear policies and strategies to ensure that both boys and girls are motivated to achieve their full potential in their chosen fields.

The Youth Summit believes that this can be achieved through the following actions:

1. Revise curricula so that they respect that individuals learn at different paces and in different styles, and find different subjects relevant to their life choices.
2. Promote effective use of role models to inspire the educational development of young people.
3. Use the public media to raise the profiles of young people who have achieved in education against adversity.

Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances

The 15CCEM Education Youth Summit is concerned that:

Many young people in the Commonwealth suffer from physical and emotional special needs and that education in the Commonwealth does not provide adequate access for these students with special needs.

The Youth Summit recommends to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education that:

Ministers develop and maintain appropriate access and inclusion for special needs students to improve their opportunity to achieve.

The Youth Summit believes that this can be achieved through the following actions:

1. Ensure that all teachers in the Commonwealth have basic training in special education, with more teachers trained specifically in special physical and emotional needs.
2. Develop and / or promote a special needs support unit within the Education Ministries which involves youth in developing the support structures for those with special needs.
3. Establish and maintain the infrastructures in education to accommodate young people with special needs.
4. Enforce education legislation in every Commonwealth country against discrimination based on disability.

Improving Quality in Education

The 15CCEM Education Youth Summit is concerned that:

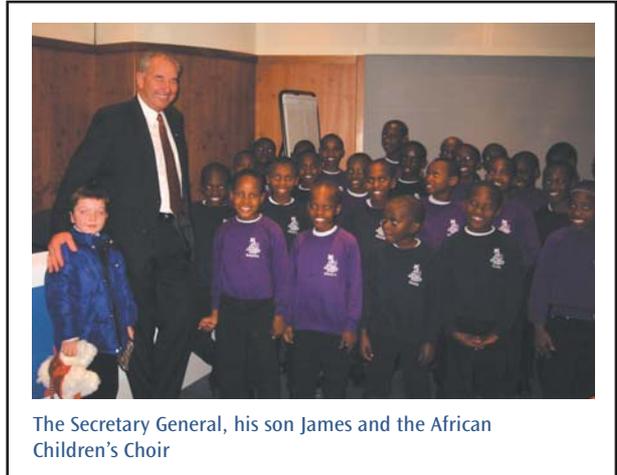
In many areas of the Commonwealth, there is an insufficient number of qualified and trained teachers. Moreover, the standard of their training is impeding the improvement of the quality of education.

The Youth Summit recommends to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education that:

Ministers create positive incentives throughout the Commonwealth to recruit quality people into the teaching profession and provide them with a high standard of training so they can do their job effectively.

The Youth Summit believes that this can be achieved through the following actions:

1. Include learners in the process of training and selecting teachers.



The Secretary General, his son James and the African Children's Choir

2. Ensure that teachers of specialist subject areas are properly trained.
3. Include child psychology, conflict resolution and non-violent discipline approaches in teacher training.
4. Raise the profile of teaching as a respectable and worthwhile profession.

Using Distance Learning to Overcome Barriers

The 15CCEM Education Youth Summit is concerned that:

Not all Commonwealth countries have access to open and distance learning infrastructure and resources, including human resources.

The Youth Summit recommends to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education that:

Ministers make measurable progress towards achieving access to open and distance learning infrastructures and resources for all Commonwealth countries before the next CCEM.

The Youth Summit believes that this can be achieved through the following actions:

1. Teachers should be trained to use the technologies required for open and distance learning.
2. There is consistency in the delivery of open and distance learning across communities' centres.
3. Ensure that donated resources are allocated appropriately and equitably.

15CCEM Parallel Symposium Recommendations to Ministers

Interim Report from 15CCEM Parallel Symposium 29 October 2003

In her opening address Amina Ibrahim expressed the hope that through the Symposium ‘we should be able to consolidate on the gains we have made at our different levels; share best and worst practice, measure our successes and failures constructively, so that we may continue to accelerate our actions towards the goals that have eluded us so far.’

She also reminded us that ‘It is essential we address the design and delivery of education within the realities of our countries so that we avoid the disconnect between the well-meaning declarations that we make and the reality of our environments...’

Bob Fryer reminded us that we live in an era of profound social change. Professor Sen also expressed eloquently the way in which education should improve the security of individuals and communities that are being challenged by the threats arising from living in an era which is characterised by rapid change.

Professors Natarajan and Fryer from their different perspectives set out the challenges of producing a new generation of learners able to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Brendan Nelson encouraged young people to create their own world and not to necessarily accept the one bequeathed to them by the current generation.

Symposium delegates have worked hard to respond to these exhortations for action.

The Symposium sessions were organised to address the major themes of Access, Inclusion and Achievement and the cross-cutting themes of Capacity Building, HIV/AIDS and Millennium Development Goals. As the planning of the Ministers’ conference proceeded, the wisdom of focussing on a number of key areas for action became evident. These action areas are

- Universal Primary Education
- Gender Disparities in Education
- Improving Quality in Education
- Using Distance Learning to Overcome Barriers
- Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances
- Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems.

In each of these cases a number of the Symposium sessions were relevant, e.g. the sessions on inclusive education from policy to practice, social inclusion and education in difficult circumstances clearly have relevance for the Action Area ‘Supporting education in difficult circumstances.’

The Parallel Symposium therefore commends the attention of Ministers to the following proposed agendas for action in each of the six areas.

Universal Primary Education

- In order to ensure we achieve the delivery of EFA, all countries and the international community should revisit and re-commit to the Dakar EFA goals. Attention to the Dakar goals will ensure the achievement of the MDGs.
- International commitment to providing free basic education of high quality needs to be followed up with concerted action at the national level that ensures that constitutional and legislative mechanisms are put in place to remove this barrier to education.
- Both the Dakar framework for action and the MDGs explicitly underscore the importance of partnerships in the sustainable delivery of basic education. Partnerships need to be consolidated at all levels with civil society, the private sector and the international community. The principle stakeholders must develop common understandings of the definition and scope of basic education. Governments must recognise that all pupils, parents and teachers are stakeholders in this process. There is no “one size fits all” approach to partnerships, and local solutions may vary.

Gender Disparities in Education

- Without a doubt the actualisation of the gender goal by 2005, Eliminating Gender Disparities, is essential not only to the Dakar framework and DFA but to the achievements of all the 8 MDGs.
- National governments are called upon to ensure that they have the necessary institutional and financial capacity to plan for the mainstreaming of gender, boys and girls, into policy and strategies for implementation in partnership with civil society.

Improving Quality in Education

- Central to achieving the 2015 goals and to improving the quality of education is lifting the quality of teachers and their leaders. This process must involve



Mokobung Nkomo, Chair of South African Qualifications Authority and participant at the Parallel Symposium

the teachers themselves and their organisations so that they help to provide the solution rather than be part of the problem.

- Ministers should develop programmes which build the capacity of head teachers. High-quality schools require high-quality leaders.
- Teaching needs to be re-established as a desired, sought-after profession, viewed by communities and governments as a profession of high status. Pay and conditions of service are critical factors in this regard. Governments need to coordinate their policies on teacher supply and professional development, and recognise the impact internationally of these policies. We all need to work together to recapture the glory of teaching, for without an adequate supply of well-trained, well-led and motivated teachers no country will be able to achieve its education goals.
- The impact of a relevant curriculum is essential to the quality of learning inputs and outputs in the classroom both at the level of the teacher and the child. Emphasis on innovative curriculum reform that reflects country realities especially in federal systems and the achievement of the Dakar goals must be supported at both international and national levels.
- While funding alone will not deliver a quality education, the availability of adequate funding in

recurrent and capital budgets needs to be prioritised at national level while the international community must deliver on funding the gaps to support government efforts.

Using Distance Learning to Overcome Barriers

- ICT offers a wonderful opportunity to help close some gaps. It can reach people in remote or rural areas, for example, and can be used to deliver the curriculum in flexible ways to suit the varied needs and lifestyles of citizens everywhere. Governments should develop strategies to make the best use of ICT in their country so that it is used to close the gaps not to widen the digital divide.

Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances

The education of children in difficult circumstances takes on two dimensions. One is the familiar context of marginalised groups such as the nomads, traders, HIV/AIDS-infected, while the other one deals with environments created by the absence of human and child rights.

- National governments and international partners must strive to design and provide non-formal structures to accommodate the same quality inclusive education as for those in formal education.

- National governments must ensure conventions signed by them in support of human and child rights are enacted into law at country level, thus creating an environment where there would be zero tolerance for crimes against the child and women.

Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education Systems

- The threat of HIV/AIDS is extremely serious in some countries now, and potentially serious in all countries. Education about HIV/AIDS should start at the early childhood stage and should involve parents. Young people themselves need to be involved in developing reproductive health programmes.
- Governments need to support research and development into HIV/AIDS and its impact upon their education system. Countries have much to learn from one another by the transfer of information, knowledge, experience and expertise on this vexed issue.

In conclusion, there is an urgency to make **ACTION** our watchword if we are to tend to our youth, which

is tomorrow's future. We need to, as critical friends, engage in open and transparent dialogue that will enable the monitoring of all stakeholders in the delivery of EFA. We must build on the strengths of the Commonwealth and ensure we share knowledge through a network of best practice.

At this juncture we would like to recommend that the Ministers create awards for best practice in each one of the six areas, to be awarded at the 16CCEM.

We hope we have provided constructive recommendations that you, our honourable Ministers, will be able to act upon and carry forward to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting being held in December this year. We thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your Ministerial sessions as they conclude tomorrow.

Finally, we have the pleasure in handing over the Interim Report from this Parallel Symposium. We hope that it will contribute to the formulation of the action plans which are being prepared.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Edinburgh Communiqué and Action Plan

15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom, 27-30 October 2003

1. Education Ministers and representatives from forty-eight Commonwealth countries met in Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom from 27-30 October 2003 for the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM).
2. The essence of the Conference can best be encapsulated in the following statements:

I am a beautiful, confident, strong, educated young woman... We need more of us.

Carolanne Makakaufaki, Tonga, Youth Summit Delegate

If we continue to leave vast sections of the people of the world outside the orbit of education, we make the world not only less just, but also less secure.

Professor Amartya Sen, Keynote Speaker
3. Unique about this Conference was the input of a Youth Summit and a Parallel Symposium, which fed directly into the Ministerial Conference. Ministers engaged in discussions around the theme of the Conference and the six Action areas in break-out sessions with the Parallel Symposium and the Youth Summit. The range and complexity of the discussions are summarised in Annex A, attached. Summaries of the Conclusions of the Youth Summit and the Parallel Symposium are attached at Annexes B and C.
4. Ministers reviewed progress in education across the Commonwealth in the context of the main theme of the conference - Closing the Gap: Access, Inclusion and Achievement. They identified key issues, challenges and opportunities that needed to be addressed if their educational aspirations were to be achieved.
5. They identified six Action Areas where work would be taken forward to address these challenges: Achieving Universal Primary Education; Eliminating Gender Disparities in Education; Improving Quality in Education; Using Distance learning to Overcome Barriers; Supporting Education in Difficult Circumstances; Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS in Education.
6. The key point made by delegates from the Youth Summit was that young people should be directly involved in developing education systems, including participation in Youth Councils, and involvement in the selection of teachers and in the design and evaluation of resource materials and the curriculum.
7. Running through the recommendations made by the Parallel Symposium was the recurring theme of Partnership without which, they suggested, future action on all six Action Areas could not be taken forward successfully. Such partnerships should be formed at the widest level between and among governments, civil society, the private sector and the international community; and at ground level between pupils, teachers, head teachers and parents.
8. They also recommended sharing knowledge through a network of Best Practice. To show the importance that the Commonwealth places on this, they recommended the creation of an award for Best Practice in each of the six Action Areas, which would be presented for the first time during 16CCEM.
9. Ministers affirmed that education is a crucial means for adapting to and directing change; reducing poverty, ensuring security; improving health and well-being; enhancing economic prosperity and personal security and safety; promoting fairness, justice, and peace; and achieving environmental sustainability.
10. Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress made on taking forward the Action Areas identified in the Halifax Statement, and the need to work with vigour if they were to meet the targets of the Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Universal Primary

Education (UPE) and Eliminating Gender Disparity (EGD). To do this, combined efforts and vision will be required from all governments, other public sector stakeholders, civil society and the private sector, including support for policies that enhance and facilitate building capacity and achieving these goals, while avoiding practices that may impede progress.

11. Welcoming delegates to Scotland, First Minister the Rt Hon Jack McConnell MSP, said that Scotland has a long tradition of valuing and investing in education. I hope that we can all learn from the ideas, expertise and experience from around the world which is collected here this week.
12. The UK Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP, opened the 15CCEM with the statement that education is at the centre of the Commonwealth. He launched the Global Gateway, an on-line system to promote and enable partnership working to support Commonwealth education.
13. Ministers affirmed the unique value of the Commonwealth recognising that it is ideally placed to share expertise, resources and best practices in education as a vital component in attaining the individual and collective goals and aspirations for their countries. Noting the significance that Youth Summit delegates placed on meeting together as members of the Commonwealth, it is important to provide opportunities for young people to learn about the Commonwealth and its values.
14. Education Ministers discussed the critical issue of cross-country teacher recruitment. This was viewed by Ministers as one of the most urgent issues to be addressed in "closing the gap". They established a working group on this issue, to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, to develop appropriate and ethical codes of conduct. The working group is to report to all Ministers by the end of April 2004, and an ad hoc group of Ministers will finalise the document by September 2004.
15. Ministers emphasised the importance of ongoing, lifelong professional development for all teachers including the leadership development of head teachers.
16. Ministers accepted the new structure of the Commonwealth Secretariat. They recognised that it complements the already existing Commonwealth advantages, namely, the broad similarity amongst educational systems, the almost universal use of the English language, and the multiplicity of civil society organisations and professional associations that exist at a Commonwealth level and which contribute to Commonwealth education and training. Ministers approved the Education Section's Work Plan which focuses on the new role of advocacy, brokering and acting as a catalyst.
17. Having made notable progress with the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, Ministers gratefully received Malta's declaration to become the fourteenth country to agree to fund a Fellowship under the Plan. Ministers recognised that smaller states need more scholarships and fellowships.
18. Ministers supported the establishment of the Centre for Commonwealth Education, a partnership between the Commonwealth Institute and Cambridge University as a significant additional asset in meeting the educational challenges facing the Commonwealth. They welcomed the announcement of a £1.25m private donation to the centre for carrying out some of its future activities.
19. Ministers complimented the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) on its work and accomplishments of the past three years. They approved the 2003-06 business plan and pledged financial support. In view of the impending retirement of President Gajaraj Dhanarajan, they recorded their appreciation for his significant contribution to the Commonwealth through his many years of dedicated work. They also welcomed the new Chair, Mr Lewis Perinbam.
20. Ministers endorsed the proposal, requested at the 14CCEM, for a Virtual University for Small States, designed to offer opportunities for expanded access to education, teacher training and upgrading, and which may also benefit other regions and states of the Commonwealth. Ministers decided that COL should take leadership of this capacity-building initiative, and collaborate with existing resource institutions in member countries. In order for this initiative not to be a burden on COL, Ministers directed COL to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat to identify sources of funding to take this concept forward.
21. Education Ministers agreed to the attached message to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), to be held in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2003 emphasising the importance of mobilising a broad range of Commonwealth resources in meeting educational targets by 2015, as a contribution to social reconstruction in the Commonwealth.

22. Ministers were unanimous in voicing their appreciation for the outstanding hospitality and warm welcome extended by the UK and the Scottish hosts.
23. Ministers warmly welcomed the suggestion that the next Conference be held in Malaysia, subject to confirmation by the Malaysian Government.
24. Based on the Conference's rich dialogue and exchanges, Ministers agreed to a set of actions around the six Action Areas. Ministers asked the Commonwealth Secretariat and its partner organisations to monitor and report on the implementation of the Edinburgh Action Plan.

The Edinburgh Action Plan

Ministers agreed:

25. To meet with Youth Summit delegates from their own country to consider the outcomes of 15CCEM.
26. That every future CCEM will have a Youth Summit where Ministers inform delegates on progress and consult them on future actions. As the Youth Summit said, We can't do it ourselves, but you can't do it without us.
27. That a Working Group be established to consider cross-country teacher recruitment, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, to report back to Ministers in April 2004; and that an ad hoc group of interested Ministers would then meet not later than September 2004 to agree action.
28. Recognising that many countries regard education as a public good and that there is widespread concern that the inclusion of education under the WTO and GATS as a service could lead to its commodification, Ministers agreed that Commonwealth Heads of Government should affirm the paramount importance of safeguarding the values, standards and quality of education.
29. That the Commonwealth as a whole, and most particularly the wealthier countries within it, use their influence within the G8 and elsewhere to ensure that the Dakar commitments are adhered to by the international community, in particular within the framework of the fast track initiative.
30. To develop mechanisms to include learners in decisions about their education.
31. To individually and collectively promote education by:
 - a) Sponsoring an international commonwealth education day where the funding raised will be used to train young people as peer educators in HIV/AIDS
 - b) making awards for good practice in the six Action Areas, to be presented at 16CCEM
 - c) Promoting teaching as a career and encouraging teacher representation at parallel forums at 16CCEM
 - d) Introducing and/or strengthening initiatives to promote the involvement of parents and guardians in education.
32. Ministers agreed to develop a shared understanding of the elements which constitute an excellent education system, recognising that education must be of high quality if it is to make a positive difference to the lives of young people and their communities.
33. That the more developed countries should be requested to facilitate greater opportunities for higher education and skills training for Commonwealth citizens, in a spirit of co-operation and sharing.
34. To ask the Commonwealth Secretariat to take stock of best practices in eliminating gender disparity.
35. To share best practice and expertise in supporting children in difficult circumstances.
36. To include compulsory age-appropriate HIV/AIDS education in the curriculum of every education system within the Commonwealth, including teacher education.

**Commonwealth Secretariat
Edinburgh, Scotland
30 October 2003**

ANNEX A

Summary of the key points raised in the discussion on the theme of the conference and the six action areas.

Access

1. Ministers recognised that too many children in the Commonwealth are still denied access to education. The barriers to access were identified as culture; lack of finance, proper infrastructure and teachers. In order to address the problems, Ministers recommended development of partnerships between governments, civil society, donor organisations and the international lending agencies. In order to increase access at tertiary level the more developed countries needed to offer university places to Commonwealth students at concessionary rates.

Inclusion

2. Ministers fully recognised that inclusion is a critical issue in education; that is inclusion of each individual in the educational process. Accordingly, barriers to participation should be identified and removed and provision made for each individual to obtain high quality relevant education. There should be equality of opportunity irrespective of gender, religious belief, ethnicity, socio-economic status, colour or disability. Every student should have access to good quality education at least to the end of primary school.
3. Ministers identified the development of the necessary policies, strategies and legislation as critical and urged governments which have not yet taken the necessary actions to do so urgently.

Achievement

4. Ministers felt that a key action in addressing achievement was the development of a clear definition of achievement. They felt that since achievement was likely to mean different things to different members, each country should articulate its own definition and then identify clear standards for measurement. Ministers also strongly suggested that measures of achievement must be based on the full value added as a result of education and not simply on academic outcomes.
5. They were also of the view that whereas there were many variables which impinged on achievement, school leadership, teacher quality and parental involvement were critical variables for which training must be provided.
6. Ministers also noted that whereas the scourge of HIV/AIDS has been noted and was being addressed, other impediments to achievement like illegal drugs needed to receive similar attention.
7. Ministers noted the importance of developing instruments for measurement and the development of standards.

Ministers took a particular note of the six Action Areas for specific focus leading to 16CCEM and they vowed to work in harmony with broad range of commonwealth resource capacity to address these areas:

Universal primary education

8. Ministers stressed that poverty is the biggest barrier to the provision of universal primary education. Poverty can only effectively be addressed if governments face the requirement to modify the existing international trade and finance regimes to create a more level playing field.
9. Ministers reaffirmed the priority to be given to UPE but insisted it be set in the context of the Dakar consensus on Education for All (EFA) that stressed the importance of basic education. They emphasized that the issue must not be restricted to the concept of access, but more importantly to completion. Moreover, quality education is essential if learners are to have a realistic expectation of a productive future.
10. Continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers, along with the training of new teachers is essential for both the provision and the quality of education. Given the massive requirements, open and distance learning should be seen as a key means to address these requirements. In addition, ODL may be a means to address the particular needs of marginalised and mobile minorities, including Nomads.
11. One of the main groups not participating in primary education is girls, so increasing their attendance is essential. Security and the need for separate facilities were considered critical for girls to access school-based education. Community and family support could play key roles.
12. In addition, if there is to be universal access, those with special needs must be included.

Eliminating gender disparity

13. Ministers were keen to achieve the UN millennium target date of 2005 to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Ministers recognised the importance of women having access to tertiary education so that they can become role models for younger girls and women. They also noted the continued need to encourage girls into non-traditional areas of study such as mathematics and science, and women into leadership levels of education. Moreover, they appreciated the benefits to family welfare from better educated mothers.
14. While girls' access and completion remain a challenge, boys' under-achievement is a growing concern. A close review of policies, cultural practices, and curricula in Commonwealth countries would assist in addressing all gender-related issues.

15. Ministers agreed it was important to share best practice both in terms of policy and its subsequent translation into action. They felt a stock-taking of progress to date of evidence based best practices, available at country level, would be a useful starting point for the Commonwealth Secretariat to undertake. A more formal information sharing should be explored with other Commonwealth agencies such as COL for broader outreach.
16. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on gender mainstreaming in education policy and related national development plans including poverty reduction strategies as critical to the required resource allocation in reducing gender disparities.

Improving quality in education

17. Ministers stressed the importance of improving education outcomes for all learners. This will be achieved using a variety of mechanisms to enhance quality, including the strengthening of Commonwealth qualifications, accreditation frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms.
18. Ministers agreed on the importance of increasing teacher quality. They identified the issues of teacher selection, training, retention and ongoing professional development as vital to the improvement of education outcomes. They look to the Commonwealth Centre for Education in Cambridge to play a key role in this respect.
19. Ministers also pointed to the need to ensure that quality leadership exists at the school, regional and national levels. They stressed the importance of the professional development of head teachers and senior education officials. Moreover, they agreed on the urgency of improving the status of teachers so that they are in the position to “recapture the glory of teaching”.
20. Ministers further committed themselves to ensuring the availability of quality resources, appropriate to the needs of students and reflective of the local environment.
21. Lifelong learning should play a vital role in the provision of quality education, as should access to higher and vocational education.

Distance education

22. Ministers noted the importance of addressing policy issues and designing strategies that position open and distance learning (ODL) to be a key instrument for enhancing access and inclusion. There is a need to invest in the development of the skills and infrastructures required for the delivery of quality ODL. Ministers understand the value of sharing Commonwealth best practice, policy and plans, and noted that the role that ODL can play in delivering education and training to geographically separated populations and to those requiring flexible learning options.

There are benefits to be derived by strengthening Commonwealth networks and by adjusting intellectual property rights protocols so that they recognise education and education products as social goods, perhaps by developing Commonwealth conventions designed to reduce the costs of moving knowledge products amongst Commonwealth jurisdictions.

23. Ministers recognized the importance of addressing the risk that the use of technology to deliver education across borders could lead to the treatment of education as a commercial commodity subject to GATS rather than as the public good that it is.

Education in difficult circumstances

24. Many countries in the Commonwealth have to provide education to millions of children living in very difficult circumstances: poverty, unemployment, homelessness, war, famine, and of course, HIV/AIDS. The Commonwealth countries have ratified international treaties to address these issues: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO Convention, the Dakar Framework for Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The challenge now is for all Commonwealth countries to put these commitments into action.
25. There are many examples in the Commonwealth of actions that make a difference and which should be shared. To do so, it was recommended that a knowledge sharing system of best practices be set up, to share expertise, including databases to know where all children are and avoid ‘invisible’ children; the development of national indicators on improving participation by children in difficult circumstances; and the setting of targets and reporting on them.

Effects of HIV/AIDS in education

26. Ministers addressed multi-sectoral issues related to the spread of HIV infection and the impact of AIDS. They noted the urgency of accelerating educational responses, particularly the need to improve curricula and materials and the value of involving young people in this process. Teaching and learning must share information and promote understanding, but also focus on the necessary changes in social and sexual behaviour.
27. Ministers agreed to take urgent action in the area of HIV/AIDS education. They noted the importance of anticipating and preparing for the impact of AIDS on future numbers of orphans and students in the education system and on the supply and demand of teachers. They also requested international assistance to curtail the spread of the pandemic. EFA would not be achieved without tackling HIV/AIDS.

APPENDIX 1

Delegates

Australia

Hon Dr. Brendan NELSON – Minister for Education, Science and Training

Dr Jeff HARMER – Secretary, Department of Education Science and Training

Ms Catherine MURPHY – Chief of Staff

Mr Matthew JAMES – Counsellor

Bangladesh

HE Mohammed Hasib AZIZ – Deputy High Commissioner to the UK

Dr TASIRUDDIN – Hon Consul of Bangladesh, Edinburgh

The Bahamas

Hon Alfred SEARS – Attorney General & Minister of Education

Dr Leon HIGGS – President, College of the Bahamas

Mr Cecil THOMPSON – Deputy Director, Department of Education

Barbados

Hon Reginald FARLEY – Minister

Idamay DENNY – Deputy Chief Education Officer

Belize

Hon Francis FONSECA – Minister

Mr Alan GENITTY – Deputy Chief Education Officer

Maud HYDE – Chief Education Officer

Botswana

Hon Kgeledi George KGOROBA – Minister for Education

Philemon Themba RAMATSUI – Permanent Secretary

Mogotsa KEWAGAMANG – Director, Vocational Education & Training

Kgomotso MOTLOTLE – Secretary-General, Botswana National Commission for UNESCO

Oemetse NKOANE – HIV/AIDS co-ordinator, Ministry of Education

Bojosi OTLHOSILE – Vice Chancellor, University of Botswana

Patrick MOLUTSI – Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Council

Burton S. MGUNI – Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Botswana

Archibald MAKGOTHI – Chief Education Officer, Planning Statistics & Research

R.J. MOTSWAKAE – Director, Secondary Education

Daniel TAU – Director, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning

Brunei Darussalam

Hon Pehin Dato Hj Abd Aziz UMAR – Minister of Education

Sheikh Adnan SHEIKH MOHAMAD – Permanent Secretary

Pg Hajah Hairani PML PG MUDA KAHAR – Acting Director General

Hajah Kasmah HAJI SIPUT – Director of Islamic Studies

Haji Mohd Daud HAJI MAHMUD – Acting Director of Technical Education

Haji Abdul Salam POKPS DP HJ HASHIM – Acting Director of Planning, Development & Research

Abdullah/Dollah Haji AHAD – Education Officer

Cameroon

Hon Emmanuel Bantar NGAFFEESON – Secretary of State – National Education

Richard WILLAYI – Technical Advisor – National Education

Dorothy FORBIN – National Inspector of Pedagogy – National Education

Canada

Hon Jake OOTES – Minister for Education, Culture, & Employment, Northwest Territories

Hon Ron LEMIEUX – Minister of Education & Youth, Manitoba

Ms Maria DAVID-EVANS – Deputy Minister of Alberta Learning

Ms Pat ROWANTREE – Deputy Minister of Education & Youth, Manitoba

Dr Paul CAPPON – Director General, Council of Ministers of Education

Dr Loretta FOLEY – Deputy Minister of Education, Culture & Employment, NWT

Mrs Sheila MOLLOY – International Desk Office, CMEC

Mr Gerald BROWN – President, Association of Canadian Community Colleges

Ms Terry PRICE – President, Canadian Teachers Federation

Dr Julius BUSKI – Secretary-General, Canadian Teachers Federation

Mr Richard MARTIN – Head, International Academic Policy, DFAIT

Ms Nancy HECTOR – Program Manager, International Academic Relations, DFAIT

Evelyn LEE – Senior Program Manager, UN & Commonwealth Division, CIDA

Cyprus

Hon Pefkios GEORGIADES – Minister of Education and Culture

Mr Vassilis PROTOPAPAS – Coordinator/Counsellor, Ministers Office

Mr Kyriakos PILLAS – Cultural Affairs Counsellor

Mr Stefanos GEORGIADES – Counsellor

Mrs Alexia GEORGIADOU – Counsellor

Dominica

Hon Roosevelt SKERRIT – Minister for Education, Sports & Youth Affairs

Fiji islands

Hon Ro Teimumu KEPA – Minister for Education

Betty KALOU – Senior Education Officer

HE Emitai Lausiki BOLADUADUA – High Commissioner to the UK

The Gambia

Hon Ann Therese NDONG-JATTA – Secretary of State for Education

Dr Pap SEY – Director – Basic Education

Mr Musa SOWE – Head of School of Education, Gambia College

Mrs Ann ROBERTS – Consultant for Applied Scholastic for Africa Region

Mr Yahya Al-Mahtarr JOBE – Programme Officer – NATCOM

Tamsir JALLOW – Student

Calment MENDY – Student

Ghana

Hon Kwadwo BAAH-WIREDU – Minister for Education

Henry Daniel CLERK – Director

Guyana

HE Leleshwar SINGH – High Commissioner to the UK

India

Hon Dr Murlī Manohar JOSHI – Minister of Human Resource Development

Shri Alok TANDON – Private Secretary to the Minister

Shri S.C. TRIPATHI – Permanent Secretary, Department of Elementary Education & Literacy

Shri S.P. GAUR – Joint Secretary Department of Secondary & Higher Education

Prof P. Ramachandran RAO – Vice Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University

Shri V. N. Rajasekharan PILLAI – Vice Chairman, University Grants Association

Jamaica

Hon Maxine HENRY WILSON – Minister of Education

Mrs Adelle BROWN – Deputy Chief Education Officer

Mr Wesley BARRETT – Chief Education Officer

Mrs Sharon WOLFE – Consultant

Kenya

Hon Prof George SAITOTI – Minister for Education, Science and Technology

Mr Gabriel LENGIIBONI – SDDE – Ministry for Education, Science and Technology

Mr Galma BORU – First Counsellor, Kenya High Commission

Mrs Leah ROTICH – Education Attaché

Mr Ibrahim M HUSSEIN – Chairman, TSC

Mr Joel NGATARI – Commissioner, TSC

Mrs Charity GICHURU – Commissioner TSC

Mr Andiwo OBONDOH – Elimu Yetu Coalition Coordinator

Ms Emily K ECHESSA – CEF, Kenya

Ms Purity Rita MUTHONI – Student

Master Wilson MUCHURIKU

Mr Gathoga W CHEGE – PA to the Minister

Kiribati

Hon Teima ONORIO – Minister of Education, Youth & Sports

Mr Taakei TAOABA – Permanent Secretary for Education, Youth & Sports

Ms Teboranga TIOTI – Senior Assistant Secretary

Lesotho

Hon Archibald LEHOHLA

Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Education

Ms Ntsebe I KOKOME – Principal Secretary

Mr Paramente PHAMOTSE – Chief Education Officer

Mr Calvin MASENYETSE – Counsellor, Lesotho High Commission

Malawi

Hon Dr A.G. Nga MTAFU – Minister of Education

Zangazanga D. CHIKHOSI – Principal Secretary

Dr J KUTHEMBA-MWALE – Director – Education Planning

Stanley V. CHAMDIMBA – Director of Secondary Education

Epifany THOMO – Deputy Director – Teacher Education

J MKANDAWIRE – Education Methods Advisor

Malaysia

Dato' Hj Ambrin BUANG – Secretary-General, Ministry of Education

Mr Kenneth J LUIS – Principal Assistant Secretary, International Relations Division

Dr Kam Foong CHOONG – Head, Department of ELT Management

Ms Sahara AHMAD – Assistant Director, Education Planning & Policy Research

Ms Siti Ramah AHMAD – Education Attache, Malaysian Students Department, London

Maldives

Dr Mahamood SHOUGEE – Deputy Minister of Education

Ms Amaal ALI – Principal

Malta

Ms Nora MACELLI – Advisor to the Minister of Education

Mauritius

Hon Louis Steven OBEEGADOO – Minister of Education and Scientific Research

Raj Sunkur LUTCHMEAH – Executive Director, Tertiary Education Commission

Hiranand Boolchand Alimchand DANSINGHANI – Director, Ministry of Education and Scientific Research

Mozambique

Hon Mrs Telmina PEREIRA – Vice Minister of Education

Mr Virgilio Zacarias JUVANE – Director of Planning

Mrs Suzana MONTEIRO – Curricular Planner

Mr Constancio Azarias XERINDA – Primary Education Officer

HE Antonio GUMENDE – High Commissioner to the UK

Namibia

Hon Nahas ANGULA – Minister

Mr Alfred ILUKENA – Director, Namibia Institute for Educational Development

Ms Frances MENSAH – Director, Namibia College of Open Learning

HE Monica NASHANDI – High Commissioner to the UK

New Zealand

Hon Trevor MALLARD – Minister for Education

Mr Christopher HIPKINS – Advisor, Office of the Minister for Education

Howard FANCY – CEO, Ministry of Education

Mr Bruce AIDIN

Lynne BRUCE

Mr Phil SMITH

Mr Anthony DAVIES – Manager Policy/Strategy

Nigeria

Hon Prof Fabian Ngozichukwu Chinedum OSUJI – Minister of Education

Dr Usman Bokani AHMED – Director, Primary & Secondary Education

Dr Peter Shehu ABDU – Director, Higher Education

Mrs M. O. A. OLORUNFUNMI – Deputy Director, International Education Division

Mr Festus Ndubis NDEFO – Assistant Director, BACAA

Mr U Y ISMAILA

Prof JEGEDE – National Open University of Nigeria

Dr M MOHAMMED

Prof OBIOMA – Special Assistant to Minister of Education

Prof Peter OKEBOKOLA – Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission

Dr A UMAR

Mr Ayo OKE – Minister, Nigeria High Commission

Mr O IBIDAPO – Minister Counsellor, Nigeria High Commission

Papua New Guinea

Hon Micheal LAIMO – Minister for Education

HE Jean L KEKEDO – High Commissioner to the UK

Wari PALA – Assistant Secretary, Department of Education

St Kitts

HE James E. WILLIAMS – High Commissioner to the UK

Hon Dr Timothy S HARRIS

Mr Osmond PETTY

St Lucia

Hon Mario F. MICHEL – Minister

Dr Didacus JULES – Permanent Secretary

St Vincent & The Grenadines

Hon Michael BROWNE – Minister of Education, Youth & Sports

Samoa

Hon Fiame Naomi MATA'AFA – Minister of Education

Perive LENE – Chief Executive Officer, Samoa Polytechnic

Seychelles

Hon Danny Rollen FAURE – Minister for Education

Macsuzu Helena MONDON – Principal Secretary

Sierra Leone

Hon Dr Alpha Tejan WURIE – Minister of Education, Science, & Technology

Prof Ernest H. WRIGHT – Vice Chancellor, University of Sierra Leone

John SUMAILAH – Deputy Permanent Secretary

Davidson KUYATEH – Secretary General, Sierra Leone Teachers Union

South Africa

Hon Prof Kadar ASMAL – Minister of Education

Mr Thami D MSELEKU – Director-General of Education

Mr Duncan HINDLE – Deputy Director-General: General Education

Mr Ghaleeb JEPPIE – Acting Chief Director: International Relations

Ms Gugu NYANDA – Director: Human Resources Planning

Ms Bronwen LEVY – Executive Assistant to the Minister

Dr Jav BHALI – Deputy Director – International Relations

Mr Kehtsi LEHOKO

Sri Lanka

Hon Karunasena KODI THUWAKKU – Minister of Human Resource Devlp., Education, & Cultural Affairs

Lakshman Lloyd RATNAYAKE – Vice Chairman, University Grants Commission

Indrani KARIYAWASAM – Secretary

Swaziland

Mr Jabulani G. KUNENE – Principal Secretary

Sibusiso MKHONTA – Director – Education

Israel SIMELANE – Chief Inspector, Primary Education

Tonga

Hon Paula S. BLOOMFIELD – Interim Minister of Education

Trinidad and Tobago

Hon Hazel MANNING – Minister of Education

Angella JACK – Permanent Secretary

Paula DANIEL – Chief Education Officer

Victoria FARLEY

Tuvalu

Hon Dr. Alesama Kleis SELUKA – Minister of Education and Sport

Mr Steve PARNIU – Permanent Secretary for Education & Sports

Uganda

Hon Dr Khiddu Edward MAKUBUYA – Minister of Education & Sports

Dr Richard RWAGALA AKANKWASA – Director of Education

Mr Aggrey David KIBENGE – Senior Assistant Secretary and PRO

Mr Francis Xavier LUBANGA – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports

United Kingdom

Rt Hon Charles CLARKE – Secretary of State for Education and Skills

Rt Hon Jack McConnell – First Minister of Scotland

Mr Peter PEACOCK – Minister for Education and Young People, Scotland

Ms Jane DAVIDSON – Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, National Assembly for Wales

Mr David MILIBAND – Minister of State for School Standards

Mr Ivan LEWIS – Minister for Vocational Skills

Jenny LOOSLEY – Private Secretary to Charles Clarke

Derek FEELEY – Private Secretary to First Minister

David STEWART – Private Secretary to the Minister for Education and Young People

Craig STEPHENSON – Private Secretary to Jane Davidson

Jo Bewley – Private Secretary to Ivan Lewis

David NORMINGTON – Permanent Secretary DfES

Asif AHMED – Head, Commonwealth Coordination Unit, FCO

Tony HUMPHRIES – Deputy Head, Commonwealth Coordination Unit, FCO

Mike Ewart – Secretary, Scottish Executive Education Department

Colin MACLEAN – Scottish Executive Education Department

Elizabeth WILLIAMSON – Scottish Executive Education Department

John ASLEN – DfES

Clive TUCKER – DfES

Richard URMSTON – DfES

Katherine Quigley – DfES

Des BERMINGHAM – DfID

David LEVESQUE – DfID

Don TAYLOR – DfID

Alan LANSDOWN – National Assembly for Wales, Education and Training

Margaret-Anne BARNETT

Anne DIACK

British overseas territories

Bermuda

Hon. Paula A. COX* – Attorney-General and Minister of Justice and Education

Ms. Michelle B. KHALDUN – Permanent Secretary

British Virgin Islands

Josephine E. CALLWOOD – Permanent Secretary

Angel SMITH – Chief Education Officer

Cayman Islands

Mr. Roy BODDEN – Minister

Ms. Joy BASDEO – Permanent Secretary

Mr. Sam BASDEO – President, Community College

Montserrat

Hon Eugene SKERRITT – Minister of Education

Idabelle MEADE – Permanent Secretary – Education

St Helena Island

Mr. William DRABBLE – Member of Executive Council

Turks & Caicos Island

Hon Lillian ROBINSON-BEEN – Minister of Education, Youth, Sports & Culture

Mrs Clara GARDINER – Permanent Secretary of Education

United Republic of Tanzania

Hon Joseph J. MUNGAI – Minister for Education and Culture

Hon Haroun A SULEIMAN – Minister for Education, Sports & Culture, Zanzibar

HE Hassan Omar Gumbo KIBELLOH – High Commissioner to the UK

Ricky A. MPAMA – Chief Education Officer

Idriss A'WAILIL YAHYA – Director, Zanzibar

Rosalia P. MSOFFE – Acting Chief Inspector of Schools

Mary A MUNGAU – Curriculum Developer, Tanzanian Institute of Education

Muhwela M.A. KALINGA – Private Secretary to the Minister

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Hon Andrew MULENGA – Minister

HE Mr Anderson K. CHIBWA – High Commissioner to the UK

Mr Alfred SIKAZWE – Director – Standards & Curriculum

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Rt. Hon. Don MCKINNON – Secretary-General

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Mr Ignatius TAKAWIRA – Youth Affairs Special Advisor and Head

APPENDIX 2

Observers

ABCollections

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Association of Colleges

Ms Josephine CLOUGH – International Director

Association of Commonwealth Examination & Accreditation Bodies

Miss Elizabeth NORRIS – President

Mr Colin ROBINSON – Information Officer

Association for the Development of Education in Africa

Dr Hamidou BOUKARY – Senior Programme Manager

Bernard van Leer Foundation

Peter LAUGHARN

British Council

David GREEN – Director-General

Rod PRYDE – Assistant Director-General

Mary STIASNY – Director, Education and Training Group

Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM)

Ms Myrna BERNARD – Programme Manager, Human Resource Development

CASTME

Mr Dennis CHISMAN – Treasurer & Vice-President

Ms Lynne SYMONDS – Liaison Officer

Commonwealth Business Council

Dr Ravi NAGARAJAN – Advisor

Leena CHATTERJEE – Programme Manager, CBC Academy

Commonwealth Consortium for Education

Mr Colin N. POWER – Chair

Mr Peter R.C. WILLIAMS – Hon. Secretary

Commonwealth Countries League, UK

Mavis LONGHORN – Chairman of Trustees Education Fund

Sheila KENHARD – Administrative Secretary

Commonwealth Institute/Centre for Commonwealth Education

Miss Judith HANRATTY

Mr Robert ALSTON

Prof Donald MCINTYRE

Miss Barbara CORBETT

Commonwealth Foundation

Mr Colin BALL – Director

Commonwealth Local Government Forum

Mr Carl WRIGHT – Director

Mr Graham LANE – Councillor

Commonwealth of Learning

Mr Lewis PERINBAM – Chairman, Commonwealth of Learning

Dr Gajaraj DHANARAJAN – President and Chief Executive Officer

Mr Brian LONG – Vice-President

Ms Helena FEHR – Governance and Programme Officer

Ms Doris McEACHERN – Manager, Finance and Administration

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Ms Shona BUTTERFIELD – Member COL Board of Governors

Dr Tara de MEL – Member COL Board of Governors

H E Ambassador Michael OMOLEWA – Member COL Board of Governors

Dr Usha REDDI – Director CEMCA

Mr Dave WILSON – Communications Manager

Dr Glen FARRELL – Consultant Commonwealth of Learning

Mr David WALKER – Education Specialist Educational Technology

Dr Asha KANWAR – Education Specialist Higher Education

Ms Helen LENTELL – Education Specialist Training and Materials Development

Mr Vis NAIDOO – Education Specialist Educational Technology

Mr Paul WEST – Education Specialist Knowledge Management

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (UK)

Prof Trudy HARPAM – Chair

Dr John KIRKLAND – General-Secretary

Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC)

Mark N. F. ROBINSON – Executive Chair

Martin KENYON – Parliamentary Liaison Officer

Education International/All Africa Teachers' Organisation

Thomas A. BEDIAKO – Chief Coordinator

Mr Steve SINNOTT – Chair, Commonwealth Teachers' Group

Japan International Cooperation Agency

Mr Aiichiro YAMAMOTO – Resident Representative in the UK

Mr Hideo EGUCHI – League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers

League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers

Anna TOMLINSON – Director

Gillian TALLACH – Programme Officer

Ms Lesley AUGER – National Union of Teachers, UK

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Mr Michael LERRY – Manager

Anthony Ross DAVIES – Manager, Policy/Strategy

Royal Commonwealth Society

Mr Stuart MOLE – Director General

B. Aimé SANGARA – Head of Public Affairs

University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Prof George SUBOTZKY – Director, Education Policy Unit

Ms Colleen HOWELL – Education Policy Unit

World Bank

Ms Ruth Kagia, Director Education

APPENDIX 3

Provisional Ministerial Agenda

Date	Time		Comments
Saturday 25th Oct		Ministers who wish to arrive in the UK before the 15CCEM begins may participate in focused visits to educational establishments in the UK.	The Scottish Executive is prepared to act as intermediary in organising these visits. Please contact the SE for further details.
Sunday 26th Oct		Arrival of Ministers.	
	18:00 to 20:00	Reception: hosted by University of Edinburgh/ Commonwealth Scholarships/CEC.	Ministers who wish to, are invited to attend this event.
Monday 27th Oct	09:00 to 13:00	Possible Ministerial visits to educational institutions in Central Scotland. Ministers are invited to join the Parallel Symposium (PS) for sessions during this day. Ministers are encouraged to visit the Showcase of Best Practice in the Cromdale Hall in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC).	Ministers are asked to indicate in correspondence prior to the conference that they wish to participate in visits.
	10:00 to 13:00	Senior Officials meeting Election of chair and adoption of agenda Governance issues Additional Business meetings with: – ComSec – CoL – CSFP – CCE – CEF	The full Programme for this Meeting will be issued separately.
	12:00 to 14:00	Lunch for Ministers and PS Delegates will be available from 12:00	The Showcase of Best Practice will be running in the Cromdale Hall and the Ministers and PS delegates are invited to visit it informally during lunch.
	14:00 to 16:00	Senior Officials meeting – continued	
	14:00 to 15:00	Briefing to Ministers from representatives of the Centre for Commonwealth Education.	
	15:00 to 16:00	Briefing to Ministers from representatives of CEF.	
	17:00 to 18:00	Receptions by countries/organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers and/or officials may choose to do this for their own country delegations. • Countries wishing to host a reception are requested to notify the Commonwealth Secretariat to secure accommodation. • Sponsors will be invited to host Receptions.
	18:30	Official photograph of Commonwealth Education Ministers	Joint event with PS/YS/SBP

Date	Time	Comments
Monday 27th Oct	19:00 to 20:00	<p>Opening ceremony and stagershow Pentland</p> <p>The opening ceremony will be introduced and the Ministers and delegates welcomed by the First Minister. The Secretary General of the Commonwealth will offer a short speech of welcome and there will be a short welcome to Edinburgh from the Lord Provost.</p> <p>There will also be a short message from a young ambassador from the CCYM in Botswana, a representative of the Parallel Symposium and another from the Youth Summit. All presentations will be interspersed within the stage show.</p> <p>The UK Secretary of State for Education will close the ceremony.</p>
	20:15 to 22:00	<p>Buffet Reception – Strathblane Ministers/PS/YS</p>
Tuesday 28th Oct	08:00 to 09:00	<p>Breakfast briefing by the Centre for Commonwealth Education to Select Committee of Ministers.</p>
	09:00 to 10:30	<p>Session One (1): Pentland</p> <p>Joint Opening Session with the Parallel Symposium and the Youth Summit delegates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and introduction of the Keynote Speaker – Professor Amartya Sen. • Keynote Speaker address; Prof. Sen will offer his views on the Themes of the Conference and host a 15 minute Question and Answer session. • A representative of the Parallel Symposium will give a short description of how their discussions have progressed. • A representative of the Youth Summit will also give a short description of their work to date. • External facilitator to lead on general feedback and comments from the informal discussions. • A Commonwealth Education Minister will be asked to close the session. <p style="float: right;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegates of all 3 events will participate in this session in the main auditorium. • All speakers will be briefed in advance to keep their contribution to the Theme and with a view to focusing thoughts and discussions on the importance of education to a new and vibrant Commonwealth. </p>
	10:30 to 11:00	<p>Break YS delegates return to Murrayfield</p>
	11:00 to 12:30	<p>Session Two (2): Lomond Suite Ministers in Plenary</p> <p>2.1: Election of Chair, approval of Agenda, Timetable and procedures, Report from SOM.</p> <p>2.2: Access, Inclusion and Achievement: Closing the Gap (Plenary focused discussion).</p> <p>The purpose of this session is to highlight the key issues and open the debate.</p> <p>Three Ministers will be invited to speak for 5 minutes each on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Response to the Key Note speaker and plenary debate in the First Session. – Linking the three themes of Access, Inclusion and Achievement together. – Drawing out the 4 Cross Cutting Issues. <p>The remainder of the session to be plenary discussion.</p>

Date	Time		Comments
Tuesday 28th Oct	12:30 to 14:00	Buffet Lunch	Ministers and PS Delegates may choose to have their lunch in the Cromdale suite where the Showcase of best practice will be taking place.
	14:00 to 15:30	<p>Session (3): Lomond Suite</p> <p>Presentations and launch of specific initiatives by Commonwealth Ministers and specific Commonwealth organisations:</p> <p>Launch of Global Gateway by UK and other possible pan-Commonwealth initiatives to be proposed by other countries</p> <p>Presentation of Initiatives by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships Plan, the Commonwealth of Learning and the CCE.</p>	
	15:30 to 16:00	Break	
	16:00 to 17:30	<p>Session Four (4): Lomond Suite</p> <p>Ministerial Committees: Deepening the themes of Access, Inclusion and Achievement.</p> <p>The purpose of this session is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharpen and highlight the different perspectives on each of the topics. • Identify and Articulate the priorities for the Commonwealth in these areas. <p>Two Ministers will be invited to begin the discussions in each of the areas. The Ministers will be identified once the expressions of interest have been received.</p> <p>A) Access</p> <p>B) Inclusion</p> <p>C) Achievement</p> <p>The detailed planning of this session will be done once the responses from Ministers registering their interests have been received.</p>	
	19:30 to 22:30	15CCEM dinner hosted by First Minister for all Ministers at the Museum of Scotland.	
	20:00 to 23:30	Ceilidh (Scottish Country Dance) for other delegates hosted by NUT and EIS at the Hub, near Edinburgh Castle. A simple finger buffet and soft drinks will be available.	
	20:00 to 23:30	An alternative evening event may be arranged for those not wanting to attend the Ceilidh – free time, etc.	

Date	Time	Comments	
Wednesday 29th Oct	08:00 to 09:00	Breakfast meeting with CEF and the 17 countries involved in the Commonwealth Education Fund.	For the countries involved in CEF to learn more about the Fund and how they can benefit from it.
	09:00 to 09:30	Session Five (5): Plenary session Virtual University for Small States.	CoL presentation.
	09:30 to 11:00	Session Six (6): Joint session of Ministers and Parallel Symposium Delegates Roundtables with PS delegates focusing on the 6 Action Areas: – Universal Primary Education – Gender disparities in education – Improving quality in education – Using distance learning to overcome barriers – Supporting education in difficult circumstances – Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems	This is to prompt thinking from both Ministers and PS delegates as to the issues that are of importance to each; to help them realise the expertise and knowledge that is already available across the Commonwealth and to add value to the plans for future work on the Action Areas.
	11:00 to 11:30	Break	
	11:30 to 12:30	Session Seven (7): Lomond Suite Commonwealth Teacher and Learners Issues. Plenary: Presentations and discussions.	
	12:30 to 15:00	Sit down lunch and discussions with the Youth Summit at Murrayfield.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers will share tables for lunch with young people. • The discussion on each table will focus on different aspects of the theme. • Young people will be coached in advance on approaches to Ministers. • The layout is likely to be 2 Ministers and 10 Young People per table.
	15:00 to 16:30	Session Eight (8): Lomond Suite Report back from the Break out sessions on Access, Inclusion and Achievement the previous day, the sessions with the Parallel Symposium and lunch with the Youth Summit. This will be led by rapporteurs who will give a short presentation on each session and facilitate discussion on the important points that have arisen and help to clarify how they will feed into the future work on the Action Areas	
	16:30 to 17:00	Break	
	17:00 to 18:15	Session Nine (9): PS and YS reporting back to Ministers facilitated by external professional. – 17:00-17:30 feedback from the PS – 17:30-18:00 feedback from the YS – 18:00-18:15 formal thanks from the Ministers to the PS and YS for their work and the recommendations and suggestions they have offered	
	18:15 to 18:45	Small group of Senior Officials to consult about the outcomes for the Communiqué, Message from Edinburgh to CHOGM from the day's proceedings and the priorities/actions to be agreed on.	
	19:30 to 22:00	Reception by the Secretary General	By invitation only

Date	Time	Comments
Thursday 30th Oct	08:00 to 09:00	Breakfast meeting hosted by CISCO
	09:00 to 10:30	Session Ten (10): Lomond Suite Plenary discussion on the: (i) Edinburgh Communiqué and Action Plan (ii) Message to CHOGM and (iii) The press release
	10:30 to 11:00	Break
	11:00 to 12:30	Session Eleven (11): presentations on their future work plans by the Commonwealth of Learning, the CSFP, the Commonwealth Secretariat Education Work Programme and the CCE. Followed by a short composite powerpoint presentation outlining the capacity available in some other Commonwealth organisations This will give Ministers a clearer idea of the resource capacity available in the Commonwealth and assist them to complete their consideration of the future work on the Action Areas.
	12:30 to 13:30	Lunch
	13:30 to 15:00	Session Twelve (12): Lomond Finalise and Approve: 1. Edinburgh Communication & Action Plan 2. Message to CHOGM and 3. The press release
	15:00	Official Press Conference

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