



The Commonwealth



20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM)

Sheraton Conference Centre, Nadi, Fiji
19-23 February 2018

Nadi Declaration Education Can Deliver

Preamble

1. The 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM) was held in Nadi, Fiji from 19 - 23 February 2018. Delegations from thirty-four (34) Member States attended the Conference.
2. The Conference was opened by the Rt. Hon. Rear Admiral (Rtd) Josai Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji. The Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, Commonwealth Secretary-General, addressed the Conference at the opening ceremony. The host Minister, Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum Attorney-General and Minister responsible for Education, Heritage and Arts of the Republic of Fiji, chaired the Conference.
3. Under the theme of ‘Sustainability and Resilience: Can Education Deliver?’, Ministers received keynote addresses from the Former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark, former President of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete and the former President of Kiribati, Anote Tong.
4. The 20CCEM was the first meeting of Commonwealth Education Ministers since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was also the first CCEM to be held in a Pacific Island country; the first CCEM being held in the Pacific region in Australia in 1971.
5. Delegations representing Small States met in caucus to exchange ideas, share challenges and explore solutions which directly affect their countries.
6. The Integrated Partners Forum (IPF) was held in parallel to the Ministers’ Conference and included representatives from teachers, students, civil society organisations and higher education institutions.

7. Building on the outcomes of the 19CCEM, Ministers reaffirmed that education is a fundamental human right and is indispensable for the achievement of sustainable development. Ministers committed to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote life-long learning opportunities for all.
8. Ministers indicated their appreciation to India for its concerted efforts to meet its commitments as outlined in the Nassau Declaration.

Education Governance and Management

9. Ministers acknowledged that good governance and effective educational management practices are central to realising equitable access to quality education.
10. Ministers emphasised the need to prioritise and expand access to quality education for children, regardless of circumstances, to master basic numeracy and literacy skills.
11. Ministers agreed that high quality teaching is a priority, and that Member States should focus on how teachers and school leaders are trained, recruited and motivated and how the profession is governed.
12. Ministers committed to tackling the persistent challenges facing education by ensuring that children get the best start to enable success, future education and employment.
13. Ministers recognised the need to strengthen education management systems. They agreed to collect and use accurate, timely and relevant data to assure quality and evaluate results against targets. This will allow evidence-based interventions within the education system, improve accountability and support global efforts to enhance the quality and use of educational data.
14. Ministers welcomed the Secretariat's recommendation to facilitate the sharing of emerging innovations and good practices amongst Member States to enhance education reform, building on initiatives such as the proposed Commonwealth Innovation Hub.
15. Ministers called on Heads of Government to take specific actions to provide at least 12 years of quality education and learning for boys and girls by 2030 and to ensure no child is left behind, as consistent with the SDGs.
16. Consistent with the Incheon Declaration of May 2015, Ministers recalled their commitment to invest the globally agreed levels of public spending to education (i.e. at least 4-6% of GDP and/or 15-20% of government spending) in accordance with the local context.
17. Ministers thanked the Secretariat for the work undertaken in the publication and dissemination of toolkits including the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework and the Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for Sustainable Development. They urged the Secretariat to continue working on the Curriculum Framework for Sustainable Development and support governments in revising or strengthening their

national SDG frameworks. They request the design of additional toolkits to be made available to Member States, to support the implementation of various public policies including: effective management of education systems; effective monitoring and evaluation of education programmes; implementation of SDG4; improved financing and budgeting; and Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Building Resilience through Education

18. Working innovatively and cooperatively and in-line with the Paris Agreement 2015, COP23 and the theme of resilience building at the 20CCEM, Ministers agreed to redouble their efforts to educate present and future generations about the critical issue of climate change.
19. Ministers stressed the need for the promotion of climate change awareness including, through mass education beyond the classroom; stronger engagement with the private sector and other stakeholders; increased awareness of green and blue technologies; emerging alternative clean energy sources; and the mobilisation of indigenous and community knowledge. Ministers also noted the need to support the creation of a network of universities and research centres dedicated to climate mitigation.
20. Ministers noted the creation of a network, proposed by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), to support resilience towards climate change.

Education for Sustainable Development

21. Ministers agreed to promote the inclusion of Education for Sustainable Development into the curriculum from ECE to tertiary and for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education, and provide space for learners to explore, analyse and engage with their environment and in the process strengthen their knowledge and skills about the complex issues that affect the environment and society, now and for the future.

Early Childhood Education

22. Ministers noted the importance of providing all children with access to quality early childhood education. Given the nature of this sub-sector, Ministers also recognised the importance of multi-sectoral coordination to support and promote early learning and development of all young children.
23. Ministers recognised the need to invest in early learning with a goal of providing universal pre-primary education.

Gender Equality

24. Ministers encourage action to improve education attainment of marginalised groups and tackle gender disparities in education, whether that be boys or girls.
25. Ministers appreciated the Jamaican Boys Engagement Programme, which by focusing on boys' education has improved the educational outcomes for both boys and girls. They noted that this model has valuable lessons for other Member States.

Technical Vocational Education & Training

26. Ministers noted with concern the high rates of youth unemployment in rapidly changing job markets, the increased numbers of young people, including both those who have dropped out of school and school leavers, entering the labour markets with

little or no skills for employability or entrepreneurship in many Commonwealth Member States. Furthermore, Ministers also noted the weak bridging mechanisms between providers of TVET or Vocational Education (VE) and employers, resulting in high skills mismatches.

27. Ministers agreed to strengthen TVET policy adoption and recommended that Member States who have made progress in this area share successful TVET programmes with other Member States.
28. Ministers recommended implementing the Commonwealth Secretariat's TVET self-assessment toolkit and other initiatives.
29. Ministers noted the importance of TVET in the context of national economic development of Member States. As such, Ministers agreed to reinforce TVET integration into the national education framework recognising the need to train youth with skills for the future.
30. Ministers agreed on the need to elevate the importance and status of TVET in the national education agendas of Member States.

Peace Education

31. Ministers noted with deep concern that youth in many Commonwealth Member States are vulnerable to drugs, gang violence and street crime and in certain societies extremism. Concerted efforts are required to impart global citizenship by inculcating universal and humanistic values through peace education, creating better understanding of social rights and responsibilities, and respecting cultural and religious diversity through formal and informal education and training.
32. Ministers acknowledged the contribution of non-formal and informal learning in building the resilience of young people and the role of youth and community workers in delivering non-formal and informal education.
33. Ministers reiterated the importance of initiatives such as the Faith in the Commonwealth (FCW) programme and others undertaken by Member States and partners, and advised that those which provide best practice be scaled up and replicated across the Commonwealth.
34. Ministers further recommended including school teachers (basic education) in FCW and the development and implementation of the Tolerance and Resilience toolkit.

Strengthening Educational Partnerships

35. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of working within the Commonwealth spirit of partnership and collaboration to deliver their objective of improving education in all Member States. They agreed that success will depend on stakeholders working closely together.
36. Partnerships within the Commonwealth are based on a shared sense of ownership, trust, transparency, regular and effective communication. In ensuring the implementation of the Commonwealth Strategic Plan (2017/2018-2020/2021) Ministers of Education recognised the role that strengthened education partnerships have on the achievement of SDG4.

37. Ministers noted the need to work strategically to maximise the use of scarce resources. They requested that the Commonwealth Secretariat, EMAG and CADME are strengthened in order to provide a catalyst for the implementation of the recommendations made by Ministers, working within the agreed Strategic Plan budget, supported by resources of Member States to make them sustainable.
38. Ministers requested for the Secretariat to work with regional intergovernmental organisation e.g. Caribbean Community (CARICOM), African Union (AU), Secretariat of the Pacific Community and Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), to implement agreed regional educational strategies and avoid duplication of efforts.
39. Ministers welcomed the Commonwealth Secretariat, the ACU, and the Commonwealth of Learning's (COL) renewed commitment to work together to support all Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education. The Commonwealth Education Partnership (CEP) offers a coordinated and integrated approach to programme delivery focused on enhancing coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commonwealth at country and regional levels.
40. Ministers supported a Commonwealth Knowledge Alliance for improving education outcomes, facilitated by the Secretariat, to allow information, experience and insights to be shared amongst Member States thus reducing start up time and costs for Education Ministries to implement innovations.
41. Ministers encouraged the development of stakeholder engagement policies and mechanisms that ensure teachers, civil society, the private sector and young people are active participants in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
42. In pursuit of high quality skills development programmes, Ministers agreed to create linkages between the education sector and employers to enhance economic opportunities for skilled graduates of basic, tertiary and TVET education.
43. Ministers encourage appropriate resources for higher education institutions to further strengthen joint research, capacity building, professional development and mobility of students, faculty and staff.

Empowering the Commonwealth Secretariat

44. Ministers agreed that as a cross-cutting issue, education is central to achieving all SDGs in Member States. As such, the Secretariat is empowered to create a comprehensive, demand-driven programme to support the educational priorities of the Member States in accordance with the mandates given by the Heads of Members States.
45. Ministers agree that given the centrality of education in the development agenda of Member States, high-level leadership and demonstrated commitment to education at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is of critical importance.
46. Ministers proposed for education to be on the formal agenda at CHOGM through a session with the Heads of Government (supported by relevant Education Ministers)

to discuss and agree on how to empower the Secretariat to deliver demand-driven education programmes for Member States.

Integrated Partners Forum

47. Ministers noted the issues and recommendations highlighted at the Integrated Partners Forum including but not limited to: inadequate consultation with teachers on changes to the curriculum and the need for 19 million more teachers in the Commonwealth by 2030; insufficient resources and recognition for non-formal and informal education and to support the role of youth and community workers in the delivery of these forms of education; strengthen student engagement in decision making processes in education by developing mechanisms which ensure student views are further integrated into policy; and address national and international funding gaps in education.

Commonwealth of Learning

48. Ministers recognised the valuable service provided by COL over the last 30 years and wished it success in the coming years. Ministers appreciated COL's focus on promoting learning for sustainable development through the use of technologies leading to impressive results. They commended COL for its emphasis on Lifelong Learning for employment, entrepreneurship and empowerment which supported the on-going efforts of Member States to achieving SDG4. Ministers noted with satisfaction the growing impact of the Virtual University of Small States in the Commonwealth (VUSSC) in strengthening tertiary education in the small states. COL was complimented for its global leadership in Open Educational Resources (OER) and innovations in educational technologies.

Association of Commonwealth Universities

49. The ACU set out the important role that scholarships and fellowships play in the Commonwealth and requested Member States to contribute to the Endowment Fund. Ministers commended the proposal by ACU to enhance the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme (CSFP).

Commitments

50. India commits to sharing its best practices of MOOC platforms to Member States.

51. India also commits to share studies conducted by the Malaviya Commonwealth Chair for Teacher Education established at Banaras Hindu University.

Acknowledgments

52. Ministers express their thanks and appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Fiji for their warm and generous hospitality in hosting and organising the 20CCEM along and also recognising the strong leadership and support from the Commonwealth Secretariat. They also wish to thank all those delegations who collaborated to make this event a success.

Next Meeting

53. Ministers welcome the offer by the Government of Kenya to host the 21st CCEM in 2021.

54. The 20CCEM was declared closed.