

# Executive Summary

## ***Theme: Closing the Teacher Gap – Researching the Challenges and Opportunities for International Teacher Recruitment and Retention***

The Fourth Commonwealth Teachers' Research Symposium is the most recent in a series of research events conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat since 2006 in direct response to the request of Commonwealth Ministers of Education to undertake research to monitor the status, mobility and recruitment of teachers as presented in the future actions of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol (Stoke Rochford, 2004). Studies undertaken in 2006 revealed the unreliability and inadequacy of data and research about teachers across all regions of the Commonwealth and called on member countries to do more to capture teacher data for planning and policy-making. Symposium 2009, hosted by the National Education Association (NEA), the largest union and organisation of teachers in the USA, is the first time that one of these research symposia was held in a non-Commonwealth country.

The host, as well as the theme, of the Fourth Symposium reflects a partnership which has been fostered between the Secretariat and affiliates of Education International (EI), the world confederation of teachers organisations, and the NEA and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the two largest teachers unions in the USA. During the two-day Symposium, approximately 20 researchers, senior officials, educators and academics from Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Jamaica, South Africa, Switzerland, the UK and the USA made presentations and held discussions on aspects of the theme.

Opening and main addresses by two former education ministers, Mr Steven Obeegadoo of Mauritius and Mrs Maxine Henry-Wilson of Jamaica, were complemented by a keynote presentation from Professor Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University, California, USA, a member of US President Barak Obama's education advisory team. Presentations ranged from regional case and country-specific research, such as a paper on 'Teacher Training in Sub-Saharan Africa: Reflections on an EI Study and Initiative' by Mr Dennis Sinyolo of EI, to the wider global issues covered in a study commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 'International Teacher Recruitment' by Mr William Ratterree, an education specialist at the ILO. The diversity of presentations – all under the same theme – was further reflected in papers from Dr James Keevy of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), who spoke about a pan-Commonwealth study, 'Researching Commonwealth Teacher Qualifications Comparability', and Dr Sadhana Manik, who examined the situation of South African teachers recruited to work in the UK in her paper on 'International Teachers: Mobility and Transition Issues'.

Following this rich global confluence of data and information on the international status and condition of the teaching profession, the Symposium concluded by agreeing a Statement which reflected the main issues, concerns and findings discussed over the two days, adopted by all participants, the *Washington Statement on Teachers*.



Symposium Researchers and Presenters: (Back L-R) Dennis Sinyolo, Maxine Henry-Wilson, David Edwards, Kimberly Ochs, James Keevy, John Staple. (Front L-R) NEA Intern, Akemi Yonemura, Samidha Garg, Sadhana Manik, Roli Degazon-Johnson.

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