

Recommendations of the Symposium

The recommendations of the third Commonwealth Teacher Research Symposium fell under three headings: HIV/AIDS, the status of teachers and the implementation of the *Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol* (CTRP). The following is a summary of the recommendations.

HIV/AIDS

- 1 Workers living with HIV should be more involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of HIV/AIDS programmes; such workers must have free access to treatment and all other facilities relevant to their health status.
- 2 Employers need to find a solution to the problem of pension payments for teachers who die from AIDS-related illnesses before they reach pensionable age. Their families and orphaned children need the benefit of their pensions.
- 3 Unions should scale up HIV/AIDS education and support programmes for their members and students in order to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the education sector. The EI's Education for AIDS (EFAIDS) programme, launched in January 2006, should be expanded to reach as many people as possible within the shortest period of time.

Status of teachers

- 4 Regional and international financial institutions are urged to stop supporting or encouraging the recruitment of unqualified, contract or para-teachers, as this has a negative affect on the quality of education. The setting of unrealistic targets for recipient countries, and caps on teacher establishments and educators' salaries should be avoided. The Fast Track

Initiative (FTI) norm, which sets teachers' salaries at 3.5 times per capita GDP, suggested in the Education for All (EFA) Indicative Framework, should not be used as a barrier to salary increases.

- 5 Regional and international financial institutions should continue to support educational programmes, including access to early childhood education (ECE) programmes, free primary education and good quality secondary and tertiary education, teacher training, institutional capacity building and other progressive educational initiatives.
- 6 Governments must recruit more teachers in order to meet the EFA targets and education- related MDGs. This may call for the raising of a country's teacher stock in line with enrolment trends, in order to keep pupil-teacher ratios consistent with international norms and standards.
- 7 The recruitment of unqualified teachers should end, and training and recruitment of more qualified teachers should be expedited. In-service training should be targeted at unqualified and under-qualified teachers who are already employed in schools. Such training programmes should focus on school leadership, information and communication technologies (ICT), and other specific subject areas and pedagogy.
- 8 As an interim measure to address the need to protect unqualified teachers, teachers' unions should recruit them into membership and make representations to governments on their behalf, with a view to their becoming fully qualified.
- 9 Governments should set up, or improve upon, existing collective bargaining structures and systems. These should be

fully grounded in International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and conform to international labour standards and norms.

- 10 Governments must seek to regularise paydays, where necessary, in order to reduce teacher absenteeism and minimise disruption and inconvenience to teachers and other education employees. Since most salary delays seem to occur where teachers' salaries are paid through local authorities, governments should consider centralising the payment of salaries. This could be done electronically through the banks.
- 11 Teachers' salaries and other conditions of service should be improved, including accommodation and incentives to attract teachers to remote rural areas. Efforts should be made to improve the status of teaching and to make the teaching profession attractive to the best school leavers.
- 12 Ministries of education must engage with teacher unions, associations and organisations, and consult with them on education, labour and other relevant issues in a structured way. Such institutionalised dialogue enriches education policies and ensures ownership on the part of the unions.
- 13 Teachers' unions should strongly oppose the introduction or continuation of crash programmes such as the Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) in Lesotho and the licencee teacher programme in Tanzania.
- 14 Unions must collaborate and work closely with civil society organisations and other bodies, particularly the EFA country

coalitions, with UN agencies such as the UN Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and with the World Bank and other organisations in promoting quality public education for all.

Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol

- 15 There is a major need for stronger regulation of recruiters of teachers and their clients — public and private schools and local education authorities — through the implementation of the CTRP by all Commonwealth member governments and other relevant parties within and beyond the Commonwealth.
- 16 Promotion of the 'brain circulation' to counteract brain drain should be encouraged in order to enable migrant teachers to return to their country of origin.
- 17 'Brain waste' should be minimised through the promotion of international recognition and professional registration of teachers and their qualifications, thereby preventing the loss of teachers when they are obliged to find work that is not commensurate with their academic qualifications because these are not recognised by the recruiting country.
- 18 Recruiting governments need to provide some form of compensation when they siphon off large numbers of teacher recruits from poor and developing countries.
- 19 Acceleration of the dissemination of information to all teachers about the existence and provisions of the CTRP is needed for their protection.