



Ministry of  
Education



# LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE

on

*Advancing the Teaching Profession  
achieving Education for All goals*

Report Summary and Recommendations



*In collaboration with UNICEF, CARICOM and UNESCO*



*November 2012*

## SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

The Latin America and the Caribbean Conference on the theme “Advancing the Teaching Profession: Achieving *Education for All* Goals” was held at the Hilton Rose Hall Hotel, Montego Bay, Jamaica from November 6 to 8, 2012. The objective of the Conference was to establish directions for the implementation of the mandate of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA in the LAC region. Once agreed on, the recommendations would serve as a point of reference for investments in teachers and the teaching profession.

One hundred and eighty (180) participants from 19 countries came together to discuss and elaborate on the status of the teaching profession and strategies to professionalise teaching as one critical input to ensuring the achievement of the EFA goals. Participants comprised permanent secretaries/vice minister, Chief Education Officers (CEOs), directors of national education agencies, experts on the teaching profession, educators from the Joint Boards of Teacher Education, directors of education, education officers, researchers, presidents of teachers’ unions/associations, director at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards(NBPTS) educational advisers from the international and bilateral agencies, heads of teachers’ colleges, principals, teachers and students.

The Conference was proposed by the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, and was planned and organized collaboratively with the Ministry of Education/Jamaica Teaching Council, UNESCO and UNICEF, Kingston, Jamaica. Throughout the discussions participants were mindful of the agreed time of 2015 for the achievement of the goals

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### BACKGROUND

The target year, 2015, that would mark the achievement of the goals of Education for All is fast approaching and there are still significant issues with the teaching profession. The role and function of the teaching profession in achieving education for all goals have been identified in various fora in Latin America and the Caribbean. Many and varied interventions have been made to raise the effectiveness of teachers in providing quality education for all. However, achievement levels, assessed mainly by national examinations have shown that the Latin America and Caribbean region is lagging behind in its quest to improve the quality of education provided. The implications of these findings for the teaching profession are clear, notwithstanding the other factors that impinge on quality, foremost among them the readiness of the child to learn. Research worldwide has shown that countries that have been able to maintain high standards in the teaching profession are the ones leading in educational achievements and ultimately socio-economic development.

The issues and challenges of the teaching profession were recognized at the 8th High-Level Task Force meeting that was held in Oslo in 2008. This led to an agreement to establish the International Task Force on Teachers to focus on directions that would lead to improvements in teaching quality globally. Thus, the International Task Force was launched in 2009 as a global, voluntary Alliance of EFA partners with a commitment to support efforts intended to fill the gaps in the teaching profession.

## **The work of the International Task Force (ITFTEFA)**

*Teachers are a precondition to the achievement of each of the EFA goals and they are key actors in bridging both the quantitative and qualitative targets (ITFTEFA).*

The (ITFTEFA) identified three critical gaps in the teaching service: a) policy, b) capacity and c) financing. Since then, it has responded to the gaps through: a) research, primarily focused on stock-taking, analyses of teacher data and exchange of knowledge concerning on-going activities to support the profession; b) advocacy and policy dialogue to build competencies and to underpin enabling frameworks and management structures to advance the profession and, c) identification of levels of financing needed to support a sustainable high quality professional teaching service.

Since its inception, the ITFTEFA implemented its activities through regional collaboration and used the regional fora for the active participation of governments and teacher representative bodies in its pursuit of sustainable solutions for the challenges faced by the teaching profession. Policy fora have been held in Amman (June, 2010); Nairobi (January, 2011); Bali (September, 2011); and New Delhi, (February 2012). Case studies have been conducted and validation workshops held in Hanoi and Accra. In the short time, the ITFEFA has established itself as an active partner by supporting national governments and urging them to address the needs of the teaching profession through the implementation of effective plans and strategies that are continuously monitored and evaluated to make possible the achievement of the agreed EFA goals.

The Task Force also takes cognizance of the ILO/UNESCO recommendations concerning the Status of Teachers, (1966 and 1997 p. 23 Section IV, e) which called upon countries to recognize that “various branches of the teaching service should be coordinated in order to both improve the quality of education of all pupils and enhance the status of teachers.” A high quality professional teaching service will impact positively on Goal 6 in Education for All. It states “*improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills*” (World Education Forum Final report, page 36).

Twelve years after the statement of commitment to quality education, advancement in information technology has effectively changed the teaching and learning landscape, demanding a paradigm shift that will ensure the teaching profession stays abreast of global developments

### **Present situation**

#### **Latin America and the Caribbean countries coordinated by UNESCO, Santiago**

Research data indicate that many members of LAC societies lack the basic competencies and skills to effectively join the labour force and compete in an increasingly globalized world. The UNESCO Regional Office of Education for LAC (UNESCO Santiago), jointly with UNESCO Offices in the Region, are working to strengthen teacher performance as an imperative for policy interventions in support of education quality improvements, to enable school leavers to become better equipped to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The efforts of UNESCO in the LAC have resulted in a *Regional Strategy on Teachers*, the first phase of which was completed in May 2012 and the second which began in September 2012. The main purpose of the Strategy is to strengthen Member States' capacity and political will to support teachers, offering high-level technical assistance and data for informed decision-making and for keeping teacher issues at the centre of the national and regional educational agenda. The report on the creation of a teaching policy in LAC is a product of a synergy between two sources and types of knowledge and action criteria; one approach is focused on issues related to teachers at a regional level, and another draws together the experiences of national groups. Much progress has been made in Latin America where countries are working towards attracting the best teachers; providing high quality training and retaining the best teachers (UNESCO meeting held in Panama in April 2012).

### **Caribbean Countries coordinated by CARICOM**

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) established the CARICOM Task Force for Teacher Education in response to a request via the outcomes of the Organisation of American States(OAS) Teacher Education Hemispheric Project 2004-2009, for a regional body to oversee teacher education in the region and in keeping with a mandate given to it in 2006 to regulate and establish standards for the teaching profession in the region. The task force is comprised of representatives of each member state and specialists in the field of teacher education. To date, the CARICOM Task Force has prepared and presented to the Ministers of Education in the Caribbean:

- Guidelines for the establishment of the Caribbean Community Council for Teaching and Teacher Education (CCCTTE),
- Guidelines for the establishment of National Teaching Councils,
- Professional Teaching Standards and a Teaching Qualifications Framework,
- Academic standards for teacher education institutions.

Frameworks for Action, Action Plans and Reports of national consultations, developed by stakeholders, guide the CARICOM Task Force as it diligently facilitates the advancement of the teaching profession making it more effective for socio-economic and cultural developments in the Caribbean.

### **Collaboration for success**

Noting the many initiatives, and the commitment of the ITFTEFA on Teachers for EFA, the time has come for the ITFTEFA to take stock of the achievements of governments in the region and identify gaps to be addressed in the short, medium and long term. In so doing, the advancement of the teaching profession will take place in an atmosphere of partnerships, and in a context in which scarce resources are consolidated and used effectively for improvements of the teaching profession.

UNICEF, UNESCO, CARICOM the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning, The British Council, USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank, The World Bank and the Organisation of America States (OAS) have been long standing partners in various aspects of the development of teachers and the teaching profession.

## Expected outcomes of the Conference

1. Documentation/Sharing of successful experiences and research studies on teaching and the teaching profession in LAC
2. Regional recommendations with sub-regional dimensions that respond to the socio-economic, cultural and educational realities of the Latin American countries and the Caribbean countries, taking into consideration, financial constraints, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness.
3. A system of making public both the **regional strategy** and **biennial progress** in the individual countries and of reporting to the Latin American and Caribbean Ministers of Education meetings- thus keeping the advancement of teachers high on the regional education agenda.

Against this back ground the International Task Force for Teachers took the decision to hold a conference in the Latin America and the Caribbean region in order to consolidate progress already made and accelerate the implementation of plans and strategies.

The Conference was formally opened by the Honourable Reverend Ronald G. Thwaites, Minister of Education in Jamaica, and participants were welcomed by His Worship the Mayor Councillor Glendon Harris, City of Montego Bay. Keynote speakers were: Professor Carlos Eugenia Beca, Director of the Centre for Education Policy, Chile; Dr Cecile Walden, Expert on Effective School Leadership; Dr Morella Joseph, Programme Manager, Human Resource Development, CARICOM, Secretariat; Mr Jose Luis Guzman, Education Specialist, San Salvador, and Dr Kenneth Russell, Quality Education and Early Childhood development Specialist, UNICEF.

Each participant received a *flash drive* with 15 indexed Conference documents which included the Regional Strategy supported by UNESCO, Santiago and key CARICOM Task Force documents.

The working groups were led by Chairpersons and were recorded in English and Spanish by rapporteurs. There were two rapporteurs general: Dr Marva Ribeiro for English and Mr Jose Luis Guzman for Spanish.

The Conference was organized around themes and was conducted through keynote presentations and working group sessions. Each Working group received guidelines in order that the deliberations would focus on the themes of the Conference. The Guidelines covered purpose, expected outcomes and procedures of the working groups. The main themes and sub-themes were:

### ***I. Teaching is the foundation of development - enable professionalism***

- Professionalizing the teaching service
- Leading quality Education—effective school leadership empowers teachers and engenders learning for all

Four working groups focused on:

1. Policies to enable quality school leadership;

2. Effective teacher management information system(TMIS) to ensure informed policies and practices;
3. Autonomy and responsibility in school leadership and
4. Objective assessment of principals, job requirements and tenure- assuring suitable selection of school principals.

## ***II. Quality teachers for learners lead to a quality nation***

- Building and sustaining an effective teaching profession – enabling learning for all

A panel comprising educators and school children brought out the key challenges and made suggestions for the way forward in maintaining teacher quality

- Setting and managing professional teaching standards – enabling excellence in the teaching profession

A keynote speaker, Ms. Genevieve De Bose enlightened participants about the National Board professional teaching standards closing with an interesting interactive session.

- Attaining regional expectations through regional professional strategies and standards

Four presenters, Dr. Morella Joseph- CARICOM, Mr. Jose Luis Guzman, Professor Carlos Eugenio Beca and Dr. Sylvia Ortega- UNESCO, presented on the work being done in the Caribbean and Latin America while noting the challenges teachers and the teaching profession face in all the countries.

Four working groups focused on:

1. Regulating the teaching profession;;
2. Effective licensing of the profession
3. Objective teacher assessment as a measure to improve performance and
4. Ethics and discipline in the profession.

## ***III. Stand up for teachers Stand up with teachers***

- Multiple partners for support to professional development – a coordinated approach for effectiveness; North-South and South-South cooperation
- Consolidation of outcomes of the conference.
- The participants reviewed the Summary and Recommendations and gave their approval of the draft document. The way forward

- The document will be made ready for transmittal to the next meeting of the ITFTEFA in Namibia from November 27-28, 2012. Countries will continue the work that they are now doing to enhance the status of the teaching profession.

#### ***IV. Closing – A Tribute to Teachers***

The tribute was made through music, poetry and messages.

## **Recommendations**

### **Preamble**

We, the participants at the Latin America and Caribbean Conference on Advancing the Teaching Profession - Achieving Education for All Goals held from November 6 to 8, 2012 at the Hilton Rose Hall Hotel in Montego Bay Jamaica:

- Having acknowledged and assessed the various dimensions of challenges of the teaching profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- Noted the wide range of interventions and partnerships, in particular, the work of the CARICOM Task Force for teachers, and UNESCO led “Teachers for Education for All” Regional Strategic Project on Teachers, directed towards improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching profession;
- Recalled the contributions of longstanding partnerships with multilateral and bilateral agencies, representative bodies of the teaching profession, Parent Teachers’ Associations (PTAs) and other stakeholders;
- Having deliberated on the teaching profession, the issues, challenges and affordable and sustainable interventions, taking into consideration the socio-economic and cultural contexts of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, made recommendations for the advancement of the teaching profession in the region.
  
- **Call upon:**
  - (i) Ministers of education in Latin America and Caribbean region to use their high office to forge implementation of the recommendations as part of their respective core agenda to achieve education for all
  - (ii) the International Task Force for Teachers for Education for All to take note of the recommendations in its next meeting to be held in Namibia scheduled from November 28-29, 2012, and subsequently present the recommendations to the High Level Committee of Education for All while assisting in keeping the needs of the teaching profession high on the regional agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean by mobilizing resources and expanding partnerships.

### **Teaching is the foundation of development – enable professionalism**

- a. Countries should develop policies to enable quality school leadership. Such policies should include: a clearly defined aim; identification of core school leadership responsibilities; selection and recruitment processes, clearly defined performance indicators and measures, requirements that support leadership development, processes for managing and satisfying key stakeholder groups and ethical considerations.
- b. Internal and external monitoring and evaluation of policy and policy implementation should be carried out according to regionally agreed frequency of the review of progress
- c. There should be continuous research to ensure relevance and currency.
- d. Various forums should be provided and multiple channels utilized to enable and ensure sharing and exchange of experiences, including innovations



### **Leading quality education- effective school leadership empowers teachers and engenders learning for all**

- a. School leaders should be appropriately trained to deliver school outcomes as foreseen in the national education strategies and be given autonomy to manage and sustain competency among staff, and adequate resources to meet such expectations
- b. Leadership standards, ethics and discipline should be governed by a legal framework that has implications at school level and at the level of the profession and all principals should be assessed against such standards.
- c. In ensuring a competent teaching staff, teacher assessment should serve to improve performance and should be undertaken with full autonomy by the school and the governing body of the institution.

### **Effective Teacher Management Information Systems (TMIS) to ensure informed policies and practices**

- e. Teacher management database should include a wide range of data on teachers. For example: date of entering the profession, qualifications, professional development, the number of trained and untrained teachers by school level, retirement year, and register of licensed teachers, .
- f. The TMIS should be developed with the input of education specialists, governmental authority as well as best practices and lessons learned from other countries.
- g. To implement an effective TMIS, a detailed implementation plan should be developed and personnel trained to use and maintain the system, ensuring relevant linkages and relevant access by the members of the profession.
- h. The use of the information system to advance affordable quality education should be mandatory.

### **Quality teachers for learners lead to a quality nation**

- a. Strategies should be undertaken to build and sustain an effective teaching profession-enabling learning for all through careful selection and training of persons to enter the teaching profession; and wide opportunities for continuous professional development
- b. Countries should establish, manage and monitor professional teaching standards that enable and maintain excellence in the teaching profession
- c. The teaching profession should be regulated and managed by a body corporate that could be recognized as a Teaching Council and given the legal powers to ensure an effective and efficient profession.

- d. Teacher training should be kept abreast of new developments based on research findings and carried out through collaborative working arrangements with those bodies who are responsible for maintaining competence in the profession.

### **Strategies for regulating the teaching profession**

In each country, a body should be established with responsibility for advancing the teaching profession- having in its mandate, regulation, professional development, TMIS and policy advice to the Minister of Education. The legislation/regulation should take into consideration the following:

1. Teacher should:
  - a. hold membership in an approved professional educational organization
  - b. participate in on-going professional development
  - c. adhere to a code of ethics
2. Steps should be taken to ensure that:
  - a. the recruitment processes identify the most suitable persons to enter the profession.
  - b. school administrators are appropriately trained to manage the professional development of teachers.
3. Efficient teacher management systems are in place to track teachers throughout their professional lives.
4. Effective licensing of the profession:
  - a. There should a licensing system managed by councils and unions collaboratively
  - b. There should be collaboration between the council and the teachers' colleges to access courses that could fill gaps in teacher knowledge in specific areas of need.
  - c. There should be site-based training utilizing communities of practice to support staff.
  - d. Use of technology should create nation-wide access to teacher development programmes
5. Objective teacher assessment as a measure to improve performance.
  - a. Suitable objective approaches to the assessment of teachers should be selected and the assessment results used to advance the quality of teaching and learning.
6. Ethics and discipline in the teaching profession
  - a. The Code of Ethics should appeal to the conscience of the professional.
  - b. It needs to be time sensitive, especially given experience with web 2 tools.
  - c. It is important to establish standards before creating a Code of Ethics.
  - d. The Code must be in keeping with the legal framework of the territory.
  - e. The Code of Ethics must be managed by the teaching councils and the unions/ associations

- f. Teachers should sign an agreement to uphold/observe the Code of Ethics

### **The Way forward**

1. Jamaica, as host country should disseminate the outcomes of the Conference to the invitees to the Conference
2. The ITFTEFA should promote networking among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean region and encourage and support linkages of websites and portals established for the teaching profession.
3. Each country should coordinate and mobilize partnerships and support for advancing the teaching profession, ensuring that actions for such advancement are included in loans and grants.
4. Latin American and Caribbean countries, individually and collectively make concerted efforts to keep the teaching profession high on the regional agenda – Implications are that teachers and the teaching profession should be on the Agenda of the:
  - a. next Meeting of the Ministers of Education of Latin America and Caribbean.
  - b. Meeting of CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development (COSHOD) to be held in February 2013.
  - c. next Meeting of Heads of Government of Latin America and Caribbean noting that teachers and the teaching profession are fundamental to the objectives for sustained economic development and growth.
5. Organise biennial meetings to keep track of progress in the advancement of the teaching profession in Latin America and Caribbean region in light of the count-down to 2015.