



Council for Education in the Commonwealth

**CEC Newsletter,
November 2009**

Annual Programme, 2009 – 2010

At its meeting on September 8th, the PPCC, (the committee for Programmes, Projects and Communications) decided on the programme of events for the next 15 months. It envisages:

- **8th December 2009 – Gladwyn Lecture, House of Lords, Monarch's Robing Room, 5.30 p.m.**

This year, **Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General Ms. Mmsekgoa Masire-Mwamba** will be discussing "**Women as a force for development in the Commonwealth**": She will consider how best to unlock and realise the potential of women to transform their societies through more thorough participation in education and the entire range of business and employment.



Ms. Masire-Mwamba is particularly well equipped to discuss these issues, as she has been

working on investment for her home country, Botswana, at the highest levels in the Southern Africa region and more widely internationally. As President of the Botswana Women in Business Association, she has a keen and broad appreciation of the issues that affect women in business development across a number of economic sectors. She is also Chairman of the Brand Botswana Development Team and of the Botswana Tourism Board.

Ms. Masire-Mwamba took up the post of DSG in June, 2008.

Following the lecture and discussion, we hope that we shall be in a position to make a visual presentation of one of the anniversary publications, the collection of histories of the contributions that women have made to education around the Commonwealth.

The Gladwyn Lecture is the final event in CEC's 50th anniversary year. We do hope then that large numbers of members will make a particular effort to take part in it and in the reception that will follow.

Important notes: The Robing Room in the House of Lords is officially part of the Royal Palaces, governed by their security rules and procedures. **This means that all those who wish to attend (including friends and others) must inform the CEC along with their address so a formal, named invitation can be sent.** Detailed instructions for the entry to the Robing Room (which is not through the normal entrance) will then be sent. However the meeting is open to all.

Thanks to our Patrons, Lords Judd and McNally, the Robing Room will be open to members from

5.00 p.m., so that early arrivals will be able to sit comfortably until the start time of 5.30 p.m.

Also, we shall not need to migrate for the reception to another part of the Palace of Westminster: the Robing Room is large enough to accommodate both the lecture and the gathering afterwards.

Late January – early February 2010 – Commonwealth Secretary General’s Report back from the Trinidad CHOGM, Palace of Westminster

Commonwealth Secretary General, H.E. Kamallesh Sharma, has accepted the CEC invitation to give us the customary appraisal of the discussions at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Trinidad, November 27-29). Mr. Sharma’s office hopes to be in a position to give us a date shortly.

Late March or early April 2010 - Celebrating 50 years of educational progress in Cyprus

Cyprus is one of the three European members of the Commonwealth and, like the other two, Malta and the UK, is an island state. But whereas the UK is a large island with a large population of over 60 million people, both Cyprus and Malta are small island states with populations less than 1 million. However, unlike the small island states of the Caribbean and Pacific, both are in the higher income bracket with per capita incomes in 2006 of US\$23,300 and 15,300 respectively. (In that year, the per capita income of the UK was US\$40,500.) And unlike the UK, both are in the eurozone.

CEC has a helpful contact at the Cyprus High Commission, so we should be able to arrange an informative discussion.

June 2010 Annual Conference – ‘Making Education in the Commonwealth truly inclusive’ (provisional theme)

The phrase ‘Inclusive education’ is sometimes taken to mean only education for children with disabilities. Within the Commonwealth, however, the migrations and exchanges of populations have generated not only new forms

of exclusion, but also new challenges in terms of the behaviours of children and young people. A team including Executive Chair, Valerie Davey, and Joint Deputy Executive Chair, Roselle Antoine, will be assembling a strong set of speakers to review the situation in the Commonwealth and discuss ways to ameliorate it. Roselle herself heads a college that specialises in helping young people of immigrant backgrounds and is the author of “Managing challenging behaviour: a British-Caribbean perspective” (2009).

We hope that the British Council will extend their customary hospitality by making available to CEC the conference room in their headquarters in Spring Gardens, London. The Council expects to be in a position in January to let us know on what dates the conference room will be free for us in June.

September or October 2010 – Celebrating educational progress in small states, 1970 – 2010

Four countries will be completing full decades of Commonwealth membership next year: two decades from 1990 for Namibia, three decades from 1980 for Vanuatu and four decades each from 1970 for Samoa and Tonga. Reviewing what each of them has achieved in education, how and why, should make for an informative set of discussions.

We hope to be able to stage the event in Bristol, where Prof. Michael Crossley is Director of the ‘Education in Small States Research Group’ and is the author of ‘Educational development in small states of the Commonwealth: retrospect and prospect’ (1999). Like most other members of CEC, Michael has worked in a swathe of countries: Australia, Belize, Botswana, China, Kenya, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, St Lucia, Tanzania –and of course, England- all but one of them in the Commonwealth.

He is currently collaborating with Mark Bray, Director of the International Institute of Educational Planning in Paris, on a new study of small and island states. They presented their interim findings at 17 CCEM and, if we are lucky, will both be on hand to bring us up to

date on education in the smaller states of the Commonwealth.

Given that we may also have presentations by representatives of the four states, we are thinking in terms of a half-day seminar, from a sandwich lunch to the end of the afternoon. As details become firmer, they will be relayed to CEC members. Meanwhile, it is good to know that the Graduate School of Education at the University of Bristol is one of the foremost in the UK for teaching and research on international education and development. It hosts the DFID research Consortium EdQual, a Centre for Globalisation, Education and Societies and a Centre for International and Comparative Studies.

October or November 2010 -Staying in touch: Education in Potential Rejoiners (very tentative)

Two countries are currently suspended from membership of the Commonwealth: Fiji, which joined in 1970 and was suspended in 2009, and Zimbabwe, which joined in 1980 and left in 2003. Although official relations are in abeyance, CEC and many other civil society organizations are sustaining relationships through informal channels in the expectation that both countries will eventually return to the Commonwealth.

December 2010, Gladwyn Lecture, Celebrating 50 years of educational progress in Nigeria

As CEC members know well, Nigeria is the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa with about 150 million people. Despite its political and economic ups and downs since independence in 1960, the country has made respectable progress in education. It now has a large number of private schools and universities supplementing those of the federal and state governments.

CEC has begun identifying authoritative speakers on the country's educational development and will be collaborating with the

Nigerian High Commission in staging a high quality event.

CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) and Commonwealth Peoples' Forum, Trinidad, November 22 – 29, 2009

CEC members will recall that the Spring Conference of 2007 determined that the biennial CHOGM should constitute a main focus of the CEC mission in advocacy. In fulfilment of that, CEC has submitted a memorandum to the CHOGM, urging strong and substantial support for the Endowment Fund for the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. The full text appears below.

Members will note that the submission deals with just one issue on just one page. The reason is that education was not officially on the agenda of the CHOGM, so CEC felt that a brief plea for a relatively inexpensive step in bolstering education cooperation across the entire Commonwealth was something to which each Head of Government could readily respond.

In addition to the note, CEC is fortunate to be able to support a delegation of two: Martin Kenyon and Balasubramaniam 'Chandra' Chandramohan. 'Fortunate' because CEC has only enough resources to offer just partial support to its delegates. It has to rely for the rest on their personal commitment and finance. CEC is more than a little grateful to Martin and Chandra for carrying the CEC flag to Port of Spain!

They will be running a workshop at the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum on "*Good Practice in Art Education in Conflict Situations in the Commonwealth: effective use of Open Educational Resources (OER), curriculum development and delivery mechanisms.*" The session will build on the work of 'Knowledge Aid for Sierra Leone', a project that CEC has helped support for a number of years, and interface with a presentation on "*Arts-based mechanisms for peace and reconciliation in*

Sierra Leone” by Mohammed Sheriff of that country’s chapter of International PEN.

They will of course also be participating in the meeting with Commonwealth Foreign Ministers on November 28th.

Other CEC members –Mark Robinson, Peter Williams- will be at CHOGM, too, but will be wearing the hats of other organizations, to wit, the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, (CHEC) and the Commonwealth Consortium for Education (CCfE) respectively.

The next CEC newsletter will feature a report from Martin and Chandra on their experiences at the CHOGM.

Follow-up to the 17th CCEM [Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers] in Kuala Lumpur, June 2009

Members will recall the disappointment at the failure of the latest CCEM to produce a plan of joint action, a statement for the CHOGM or even a communiqué worthy of the 50th anniversary of education cooperation in the Commonwealth. CEC resolved not to let the matter rest. All but one of its members who had been at the CCEM – Chandra, Martin, Mark, Peter, as well as Rosemary Preston and Casmir Chanda - had a lively meeting with Caroline Pontefract, Director of the Social Transformation Programmes Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat, to assess what might be done to ensure full attention to education at CHOGM, following the low-key outcomes of 17CCEM

Subsequent unofficial intimations suggest that the Commonwealth Secretariat will be reminding the Heads of Government of the 50th anniversary of both the launch of cooperation in education and the highly successful Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. Nevertheless, leaving nothing to chance, our delegates Martin and Chandra pressed the point at the mid-October preparatory meetings for the CHOGM with the Committee of the Whole (COW). [The COW comprises government officials, drawn mainly from the High Commissions in London representing their

respective governments in making preparations for the CHOGM, including a review of the draft communiqué.]

With a fair wind and energetic perseverance, they may engineer an opportunity to restate the case for the Endowment Fund before the assembled Foreign Ministers on November 28th in Port of Spain.

Follow-up on the Endowment Fund for the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

In addition to urging Heads of Government to contribute to the CSFP Endowment Fund, CEC will be approaching DFID to amplify the £500,000 that the FCO contributed in April. CEC recognises and appreciates that DFID already makes some £17 million available annually for scholarships and fellowships held at UK universities and other institutions. The point of the Endowment Fund, however, is to enable countries and institutions that cannot afford to offer scholarships to do so. That would widen and diversify the scope of the Plan and encourage more networks of Commonwealth exchange.

CEC will be requesting an introductory interview with Mike Foster, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DFID, who is responsible for education and Commonwealth matters. We plan to raise the issue of the Endowment Fund with him.

Endowment Fund: Commitment by CEC

More important for CEC members is the decision of the CEC Finance and General Purposes Committee to commit to a special effort of our own to mobilise public support for the CSFP Endowment Fund. Our CHOGM submission urges Heads of Government not only to make official contributions but also to encourage their peoples and civil society bodies to follow suit; and adds that CEC will be doing just that with its own members.

To implement this example, we have made a special arrangement with the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission by which individual CEC members can make their contributions, while the CSC will keep a tally of them. (As a registered charity, CEC may not use its ordinary funds to contribute to other charities. But it may flag its members' contributions to such charities as an earnest of its own intent.)

Brochures describing the endowment fund for the Commonwealth Fellowship and Scholarship Plan – and how to contribute to it - will be available at the Gladwyn Lecture and are being sent with this newsletter.

Responsibility for keeping the whole Commonwealth within the UK CSFP

Last year the FCO decided to cease funding Commonwealth scholarships and fellowships for the eight economically more successful Commonwealth countries. Happily, John Denham, then Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), partially mitigated that poor decision by supporting the CSFP until 2011. CEC will now be approaching Mr. Denham's successor, Lord Mandelson, as well as the Minister of State for Higher Education, Mr. David Lammy, to urge them to ensure that the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills retains responsibility and receives the necessary funding to sustain the CSFP beyond 2011 for the eight countries affected –Australia, Bahamas, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cyprus, Malta, New Zealand, Singapore.

CEC is of course not acting alone. Its CSFP Action-Support Group chaired by Valerie Davey, includes representatives of several other bodies interested in education in the Commonwealth and meets to consider ways of promoting CSFP and of exerting pressure on the government to provide generous support.

Symposium on 'Policies, Politics and Educational Progress in the Commonwealth', UKFIET 2009 Conference, Oxford, 15th Sept.

The third event to mark CEC's 50th anniversary was a 90-minute symposium at the biennial UKFIET conference at Oxford in September. The Commonwealth Secretariat's Division for Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD) sponsored the event jointly with CEC, Preceded -thanks to Peter Williams- by a keynote address by former Commonwealth Secretary General Sir Shridath 'Sonny' Ramphal, the symposium discussed the role of civil society bodies like CEC in promoting educational progress by participating in politics and influencing policy.

Caroline Pontefract, Director of STPD, took the chair. Vijay Krishnarayan, Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, launched the discussion with a review of just how civil society serves to keep educational progress moving and on track. Apart from the obvious activities of advocacy, he stressed its role as a repository of institutional memory. Ministers and their civil servant teams tend to change so often that at intergovernmental meetings a minister is likely to be unaware of what his or her predecessor had undertaken or said. Delegates from civil society are often more durable and can actually provide crucial links between one meeting and the next.

In extension, civil society acts as an effective monitor of progress in respect of the commitments that ministers make. It plays an important role in developing innovations, with one of them, COL, (Commonwealth of Learning) now making a telling contribution to the use of new technologies to widen access to high quality education and training in member states.

The contributions of civil society had been so clear and effective, indeed, that at the Kampala CHOGM in 2007 Heads of Government had called for the inclusion of civil society in all Commonwealth ministerial meetings.

Former CEC Executive Chair and current member of the CEC Governing Board and Policy Committee, Mark Robinson, gave a brief history of CEC's foundation and its evolution into a force for influencing UK policy on education. He cited the Teachers Protocol, involvement in shaping the still nascent UK strategy on education about Commonwealth and international affairs, submissions to DFID on its strategy and policies on education and the recent and ongoing campaign about Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships.

The third speaker came from Bangladesh. Ms. Rasheeda Choudhury, Executive Director of the Campaign for Popular Education and a recent past Minister with three portfolios, had been the opening speaker at the Stakeholders Forum at the CCEM. ComSec and CEC were delighted that she accepted their invitation to make a presentation at the symposium.

In her address, Ms. Choudhury pointed out that the diversity of the Commonwealth included a diversity of resources. It was necessary in places like Oxford and the UK to keep in mind that the resources of Bangladesh and other Commonwealth countries did not stretch to ensuring that their peoples had access to safe water or to electric power –reliable or intermittent- or indeed to education, even basic education.

It was certainly praiseworthy that the community of governments had for the first time in history set time-bound targets for reducing poverty, improving health and providing education. Yet where was the accountability for achieving the targets of those eight Millennium Development Goals? More than 70 countries, including some Commonwealth members, had missed the very first goal of gender parity in primary education by 2005. Yet nobody called those states to account, not the Commonwealth, the UN, nor even the lead agency for the EFA goals, UNESCO. There seemed to have been hardly any public discussion of the issue at all.

Rasheeda Choudhury concluded by stressing that political commitment to the Millennium Development and Education for All goals was

key to achieving them. Pursuing and improving dialogue between civil society and governments could help strengthen and sustain that commitment and ensure that politicians and public servants felt accountable for their attainment.

After the symposium, Rasheeda made an additional contribution: at the invitation of UKFIET, she offered a comment on the final plenary address of the overall conference.

CEC Book Launch September 15 in Oxford

Later on the same day Caroline Pontefract chaired a very well attended book launch at New College to release two books. One was the study undertaken by a CEC team with African colleagues, *'Maintaining Universal Primary Education: Lessons from Commonwealth Africa'*. Professor Keith Lewin, Director of the DFID Research Consortium CREATE (Consortium for Research on Equity, Access and Transition in Education) launched our book, as CREATE supplemented the grant from ComSec for the research and publication. Lalage Bown, who edited the book, and Valerie Davey responded briefly. Along with Lalage, four CEC contributors were present – Felicity Binns, Balasubramaniam Chandramohan, Alba de Souza and Peter Williams

The second book was Hilary Perraton's *'Learning Abroad: a history of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan'*, a very readable account of a 50-year old success story.

New DFID Education Strategy

In July this year DFID published its White Paper, *"Eliminating world poverty: Building Our Common Future"*. Among its undertakings was a promise to issue in early 2010 a fresh strategy for education. In preparation, DFID issued an education consultation paper inviting comments and suggestions. The deadline for submissions was 30th October. DFID also organised a set of face-to-face discussions

between its education team, including Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Mike Foster, and a number of civil society bodies and well known education specialists. Several CEC members attended these and also contributed papers on a number of issues.

CEC independently invited its own members to send comments on the DFID paper and has now collated them into the submission that is included separately with this newsletter.

International Literacy Day, 2009

UNESCO, Paris, honoured CEC member Lalage Bown by inviting her to deliver the annual lecture for International Literacy Day ceremonies and awards to a large invited audience at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on. This she did with her usual verve and eloquence and to such effect that she was quoted by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, in his own Literacy Day message.

CEC of course delights in the reflected glory!

The text of Lalage's address is on the CEC website.

Young Commonwealth Climate Change Summit – 28-30th Oct.

CEC Deputy Executive Chair Roselle Antoine was able to represent CEC at the Young Commonwealth Climate Summit. A youth-led initiative, the meeting brought together 150 young people and professionals from across the Commonwealth for sustained interaction over 3 days. Roselle spoke briefly on *the dangers of Ignorance* in relation to climate change within a "Reflective" framework: she prefaced her address with, "*If you think education is expensive, try ignorance!*"

Along with encouraging the young people to challenge orthodoxy, Roselle also analysed many arguments that run counter to what might seem the new orthodoxy about the looming threats of climate change. She showed that these

attempts to discount climate change as a whole were misleading. She also suggested how schools and other educational organisations could be more effective in helping to manage climate change.

The event brought together an impressive list of speakers which included both Deputy Secretaries General of the Commonwealth, Ms Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba and Mr. Ransford Smith, Baroness Glenys Kinnock, Mark Collins of the Commonwealth Foundation, the High Commissioner of the Maldives, Dr. Farah Faizal, the Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Prof. Phillip Murphy, and Jonathon Porritt, Director of Forum for the Future. A panel of youth delegates from Canada, India, Sierra Leone, Singapore and Trinidad gave an impressive set of well informed and well argued speeches.

The outcomes of these discussions will be fed directly to CHOGM in November and of course to its associated forums for Youth and Peoples of the Commonwealth. They will also be presented to the UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December.

As Ms. Masire-Mwamba will be delivering this year's Gladwyn Lecture, Roselle took the opportunity to assure her in advance of a warm welcome by CEC.

80 and still going strong...

Honorary Life Member Martin Kenyon will be 80 on Armistice Day. Currently our very effective Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Martin has served on the CEC Governing Board for years and years and years. He has been one of our most thrusting and persuasive lobbyists. As he did earlier this year at 17 CCEM and will be doing again at the CHOGM, he has devoted considerable personal resources to representing CEC and making its presence and messages known and understood.

Late breaking news...

Commonwealth Secretariat

Caroline Pontefract, Director of the Social Transformation Programmes Division, will be leaving the Secretariat at the end of December to take up a senior post as Director (D-2) of the Department of Education, in Amman, Jordan, for UNESCO/UNRWA. Her departure is a real loss for CEC, as she has been a very accessible and supportive ally in CEC's initiatives for the anniversary conference in April, its participation in 17 CCEM and the UKFIET symposium in September.

We wish her well in what will be a very challenging job and earnestly hope that the Secretariat will hasten to fill her post, as well as that of the Head of Education Section, a vacancy created earlier by Dr Henry Kaluba's retirement in August.

Commonwealth Secretariat – UNESCO

ComSec and UNESCO signed a Cooperation Agreement on 30th October. Their aim is to ensure that the two organisations work together in sharing information and promoting better policies and implementation in core areas like teacher quality. Deputy Secretary General Ransford Smith, signing for ComSec, underlined the importance of doing more for faster progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and particularly those of Education for All.

Nicholas Burnett, Assistant Director General for Education (now retired), signed on behalf of UNESCO, saying that it was extremely important for organisations to partner each other in areas of shared interest, if only to make better use of resources.

The two organisations have actually had a broader Memorandum of Understanding since 1980, but felt that the current situation needed a strengthening of the links between them.

Commonwealth Foundation

Andrew Firmin, Programme Manager for Culture and a long time friend of CEC, has resumed direction of programmes in education at the Commonwealth Foundation. Andrew also directs work in promoting respect and understanding, and in nurturing creativity and creative expression. At the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum in Trinidad, he will be helping to coordinate a session on conflict and peace-building.

For 2010 the focuses of the Foundation's Human Development Programme, of which Anisha Rajapakse is Manager, will be gender and disability. The latter topic will of course form part of the discussions at the CEC annual conference.

Institute of Commonwealth Studies

Prof. Philip Murphy has succeeded Dr. Richard Crook as the Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. CEC looks forward to continuing its good relations with the Institute, which has always been very supportive and helpful in information, advice and occasionally providing space for meetings of CEC's committees.

Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA)

Dr George Afeti, Secretary General of (CAPA), with whom CEC Board Members worked at CCEM, has completed his term of office and has now returned to Ghana. The appointment of his successor is awaited.

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