

NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS YOUNG TEACHERS CONFERENCE

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THEME: "The Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol"

Presented by Roli Degazon-Johnson, PhD.
Education Adviser, Social Transformation Programmes Division,
Commonwealth Secretariat

Introduction:

It is a genuine pleasure for me to speak to you as young professionals at this NUT Conference and I want to thank Ruth Blunt for inviting me. I could never step into the shoes of the keynote speaker Gemoraw Kassa, General Secretary of the Ethiopian teacher's Association, but I will try to do three things today. I want to talk about:

- Teaching as a Vanishing Profession and the value that you are to Education and the profession of Teaching.
- The Commonwealth and its Teacher Recruitment Protocol and the importance of it in your future and that of many teachers you may meet
- The role of the NUT in developing a Commonwealth Teachers Grouping and the importance of your membership in that body through the NUT>

First the profession of teaching:

I seriously wonder whether it will be around in another 100 years in its present form. It is you here today, that can ensure that it will be, by becoming – if you are not already – the finest that your profession can offer. Why am I starting on this crestfallen note? I work for an organization known as the Commonwealth Secretariat. That organization has 53 members. These 523 member countries comprise 1.8 billion people or 30% of the world's population. The organization's members are a blend of large industrialized countries such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the UK with some of the smallest and least developed in the such as Malawi in Africa and Nauru in the Pacific.

In a Consultation which we held at the Secretariat on January 25th 2005, the very day that Stoke Rochford Hall had its awful fire, we were told by Education International, the world-wide association of teacher's organizations, that in industrialized countries the demographic trends of ageing populations are

coinciding with limited inflows of young teachers. Teaching is no longer a career of first choice and what teachers do join the teaching force do not appear to remain for long. El stated that over the next decade 40% of the teachers in industrialised countries will retire and there are indications that a new teacher shortage of mammoth proportions is going to be upon us by 2015, the year when according to the Millennium Development Goals we are supposed to have every child in school receiving a primary education!

I will never forget when working as a HRM consultant in the Caribbean prior to joining the Secretariat I was involved in research with teachers in training at Shortwood teachers College, one of our leading teacher training institutions and the data revealed that 50% of the teachers in training did not intend to spend even one day teaching in a classroom but had their eyes set on pastures "greener" than Education.

So, we are facing a future where in developing countries in particular you – the young teacher – will be a swiftly disappearing or vanishing resource! This is good news for you, because if you are committed to this profession which is – in my own view one of the most vital and important globally - you will always be in demand if you are a high performer. You will always be able to find a job and if you are English-speaking probably in any of the countries of the Commonwealth and in many others beyond. The figures recently shared with us by the DfES for England and Wales reveal that 75% of their teacher loss is not due to retirement, or death in service (as in the case in Swaziland because of HIV/AIDS) but is simply due to resignations, for reasons unknown. People are simply not staying in the profession in this country.

Now because advanced and developed countries such as the United Kingdom can pay higher salaries for their teachers than can the government of developing countries, the developed countries have engaged – usually through the agency of recruiters (also termed "merchants of labour) to find teachers in developing countries who would wish to come and teach for a time in the United Kingdom. The UK is not unique in this respect as Australia, New Zealand and Canada are all Commonwealth members who do the same. It is this situation – the draw-off or loss of teachers from the Education systems of Commonwealth member countries, and its small states in particular, which was first raised at our commonwealth Education Ministers conferences in Botswana in 1997.

In a 2003 study which we conducted, it was projected that 2.4 million new teachers will be required in the United States by 2008/9 (the US is not a Commonwealth country) Australia has projected a national shortfall of 5,000 for this year, and in the United Kingdom this year the demand for teachers may be as high as 40,000, nationally,¹ constituting an overall total of nearly 2.5 million teachers.

¹ Ochs, Kimberly in "A Summary of Teaching at Risk – Teacher Mobility and Loss in Commonwealth member States" publ. Commonwealth Secretariat (September 2003)

If anything, given what are known as the “push and pull” factors, the situation of teachers migrating from their own countries through recruitment, will continue to grow in the future. However, the loss of teachers – human capital in any country - through recruitment and migration are felt most in systems of small countries where the stock of human capital is limited and in poor countries where the cost of teacher training is a major contribution from the national purse. Hence one reads in the press the emotive language that accompanies this phenomenon - such as “poaching”; ‘hoovering-up” and even “rape” of human capital.

The Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol:

This is where the work of the CTRP has come in. In 2002 the Jamaican Minister of Education made a formal call on the Secretariat to request assistance with addressing the loss of teachers to his education system through recruitment principally organized by overseas recruitment agencies and businesses. The Commonwealth-commissioned study “Teaching at Risk”² would later reveal that Jamaica, a country of 2.5 million people, had “lost” to the UK alone in the period 2001-2003, more teachers than a country such as Canada with a population of 30 million (See table: Appendix 1).

The visit of the Jamaican Minister led to a meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Education in Barbados from which emerged the Savannah Accord. This document called upon Commonwealth Education Ministers in general and the Ministers of Education of the Commonwealth’s 32 Small states in particular to:

- Determine the extent of teacher loss and its impact on education systems through conduct of a Pan-Commonwealth study of the problem and
- develop a Protocol for the recruitment of teachers.

A particular feature of the Savannah Accord was a request for regulatory guidelines and controls for recruiters which would address the standards and quality of the recruitment process.

At the 15th Commonwealth Education Ministers meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2003, a discussion on the critical issues of international teacher recruitment was addressed. Ministers called for the establishment of a Working Group on Teacher Recruitment under the chairmanship of Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General.

Through two meetings of the Working Group, one in Lesotho in February 2004 and the other in the United Kingdom in August 2004, a new draft Protocol was developed which was adopted with changes by Ministers of Education on September 1, 2004 right here at Stoke Rochford Hall, as a result of the generosity and support of the NUT.

² Ochs, Kimberly in “A Summary of Teaching at Risk – Teacher Mobility and Loss in Commonwealth member States” publ. Commonwealth Secretariat (September 2003)

As stated in item 2.3.1 of the Protocol, the document (of which you have all received copies) aims to:

“balance the rights of teachers to migrate internationally, on a temporary or permanent basis, against the need to protect the integrity of national education systems and to prevent the exploitation of scarce human resources of poor countries.”

This is consistent with rights-based development and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides for the right to education as well as the right to free movement of persons. The Protocol in fact outlines the rights and responsibilities of source and recruiting countries and the recruited teacher. Commonwealth agreements of this nature do not have legal, but do have moral force.

There is an urgent need to disseminate this information to teachers who may be interested in migrating to other countries and to any of you who are from the wider Commonwealth and who may have been recruited to work in this country³.

Teachers must know that they should:

- Be provided with full information regarding their contracts of appointment overseas, before giving up their jobs to migrate. (5.1)
- Give adequate notice to their ministries or departments of Education if they are resigning or requesting long leave, so as not to disrupt the school year. (5.2)
- Enjoy employment conditions not less than those of nationals of similar status and occupying similar positions (3.10)
- Be informed about the complaints mechanism by the countries to which they are recruited (Para 3.6)
- Be informed of the names and contact details of all teachers unions in the recruiting country (3.12)

The Commonwealth Protocol has sought to bring together in one instrument a document which reminds our member countries – both source and recruiting countries - recruiters and teachers who have been or wish to be recruited to jobs overseas, that they have rights, but they also have responsibilities, consistent with the efforts of the ILO in protecting migrant workers over the last fifty years.

There is however, an urgent need to disseminate the information in the Protocol to all to whom it applies:

- Recruiting countries need to be made aware that “it is their responsibility to manage domestic teacher supply and demand in a manner that limits the need for resort to organized recruitment in order to meet the normal demand for teachers”.

³ . A PDF copy of the Protocol is also available on the education web-page of the Commonwealth Secretariat web-site at www.thecommonwealth.org”

- Source countries need to know that they have the right to request from the recruiting country “consideration” in the form of technical support for institutional strengthening to increase the output of trained teachers in their countries.
- Recruiters and recruitment agencies need to know that they are obliged to notify a country in advance if they intend to recruit teachers and to receive prior agreement with the government of the country – through the ministry of education - before commencing their recruitment campaigns. And may I stress here that recruitment by Internet - fast becoming a most popular means of recruitment - is NOT exempt from the provisions of the Protocol.

There are other issues addressing Migration and Development with which the Commonwealth Secretariat is also involved regarding Mode 4 GATS, Remittances,

I would like to conclude my presentation by addressing two of these: Recruitment agencies and the ethical treatment of recruited teachers and recognition of the teaching qualifications of Commonwealth teachers

First recruitment agencies. They represent an important and growing industry in a world where globalization and other forces has increased the movement of skilled and unskilled labour. As with all industries there are the ethical and the unethical practices and the Commonwealth private sector is no exception in this respect. It is well known that whilst some recruiters are honourable, keep to their contractual obligations, provide what they promised and do not exploit the recruited teacher, there are others whose practices have been exploitative to say the least. Teachers offered one salary in their country of origin, for example, arrive in the recruiting country to find that it has been reduced uni-laterally. Some are put to teach in classrooms the day after they arrive without any orientation or induction, and others who thought that their qualifications were acceptable are advised that they do not have the same status as qualified teachers in the recruiting country. The Protocol urges teachers to exercise caution and be fully informed when deciding to migrate to another country using recruiters.

Whilst the ILO and EI will continue to police the problem of unethical recruiters on an international scale, the CTRP has called on member governments making use of the services of recruiting agencies to ensure adherence to the Protocol and to fair labour practices, removing those agencies and businesses which do not adhere to ethical labour practices from their list of approved agencies. ⁴

⁴ Pg. 11, Para 3.7 in “Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol” publ. Commonwealth Secretariat (2004)

Recognition of Commonwealth Teaching Qualifications

Commonwealth Education ministers have also called for a Working Group to explore this issue, to ensure that whilst standards are maintained in the granting of teacher qualifications, qualified teachers from one region of the Commonwealth are not put at a disadvantage or relegated to a lower status simply because the worth of their qualifications and experience are not appreciated or recognised in another region of the Commonwealth.

The Secretariat has commissioned a study on this issue and a Working Group of Senior officials who will be meeting to study the recommendations of the study being handled by the South African Qualifications Authority.

Our Ministers in the Future Actions also called for a Working Group on Professional Development of Teachers which is convened by your very own NUT/CTG.

I want to close by letting you know that a tremendous amount of the work of getting the Protocol adopted and off the ground has been facilitated by our friends at the NUT. They have assisted and supported Commonwealth Education in so very much way and at every level. General Secretary and CTG convenor Steve Sinnot addressed ministers at the 15th CCEM. This was a first. He has been a passionate advocate of the CTRP. He has assigned two of his officers to respond to Commonwealth work and we are absolutely delighted that the first ever Commonwealth Teachers Forum will be held at our 16CCEM in Cape Town in December this year.

Conclusion:

To close, you are members of one of the finest professions on the globe and you have also wisely taken out membership with one of the finest teacher's organizations that I have ever encountered. You can look forward to professional development of a high standard, whilst at the same time your rights and privileges will be upheld.

I hope that you will stay in the greatest of professions and I hope that you will serve long. To close, the year 2006 will initiate the UN Decade of Migration. The Commonwealth is extremely well poised to contribute to the work of this decade through its focus on the recruitment and migration of the highly skilled and how this affects our varied and diverse member countries especially in relation to the loss of teachers to education systems struggling to attain the MDGs.

APPENDIX 1

Table 1: UK approved work permits where the job includes teacher (Jan 2001–2003)⁵

UK Approved Work Permits where Job Includes Teacher – 01/01/01–31/01/03					
	Total Population	2001	2002	2003	Total
South Africa	43,309,000	2010	2542	150	4702
Australia	19,138,000	1011	1528	140	2679
New Zealand	3,855,400	609	887	52	1548
Jamaica	2,576,000	381	530	63	974
Canada	30,007,094	348	513	37	898
Zimbabwe	12,627,000	194	325	28	547
India	1,008,937,000	130	317	10	457
Ghana	19,306,000	53	123	13	189
Nigeria	113,862,000	60	90	2	152
Kenya	30,669,000	39	77	4	120
Trinidad & Tobago	1,294,000	43	50	4	97
Pakistan	141,256,000	22	43	5	70
Mauritius	1,161,000	19	45	2	66
Uganda	23,300,000	16	22	2	40
Zambia	10,421,000	16	22	–	38

⁵ from Ochs, K. - "A Summary of Teaching at Risk – Teacher Mobility and Loss in Commonwealth member States" publ. Commonwealth Secretariat (September 2003)

Malaysia	11,308,000	16	17	1	34
Guyana	761,000	8	21	1	30
Sri Lanka	18,924,000	10	16	-	26
Barbados	267,000	15	9	-	24
Singapore	4,405,000	9	10	-	19
Cameroon	14,876,000	10	5	-	15
St. Lucia	148,000	5	10	-	15
Namibia	1,757,000	8	6	-	14
Malawi	11,308,000	3	10	-	13
Malta	390,000	5	8	-	13
Seychelles	80,000	2	10	1	13
Sierra Leone	4,405,000	4	8	1	13
Cyprus	784,000	7	3	-	10
St. Vincent	113,000	2	5	1	8
Bangladesh	137,439,000	1	3	1	5
Tanzania	35,119,000	3	1	1	5
Swaziland	925,000	-	3	-	3
Antigua	65,000	1	1	-	2
Botswana	1,541,000	-	1	-	1
Papua New Guinea	4,809,000	1	-	-	1
Samoa	159,000	1	-	-	1
St. Kitts	38,000	1	-	-	1
Vanuatu	197,000	1	-	-	1
TOTAL		5,064	7,261	519	12,844
<i>Source: Work Permits (UK) section of Home Office</i>					

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