Concept Note

20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM)
Nadi, Fiji, 19-23 February 2018
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1. **Introduction**

The Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) is a high-level meeting held every three years where education ministers from the 52 Commonwealth countries meet to discuss key issues and engage in meaningful dialogue on education. Following the successful hosting of the 19th CCEM (19CCEM) in Nassau, The Bahamas, the forthcoming 20CCEM will be held in Fiji, on 19-23 February 2018. The CCEM will return to the Pacific region after an almost 50-year absence, since the 5CCEM was hosted in Canberra, Australia, in 1971. The hosting of 20CCEM by the Government of Fiji will make it the third consecutive small island state to host a CCEM following from The Bahamas (19CCEM) and Mauritius (18CCEM).

20CCEM will convene under the theme: ‘**Sustainability and Resilience: Can education deliver?**’, and will be discussed in the context of three sub-themes: education for sustainable development; building resilience through education; and education governance and management. In line with the theme, one of the primary objectives of 20CCEM will be to address and define mechanisms through which education systems across the Commonwealth can enable sustainable development and address major global challenges, such as climate change.

Notably, the conference theme captures issues connected to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, 20CCEM will provide an opportune moment for ministers to not only review their progress on SDG4 but also reaffirm their commitment to the achievement of the various targets outlined under this goal. As the first CCEM to be held after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development, the conference aims to support and further member states’ commitment toward the attainment of inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

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**20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM)**

**Theme:** Sustainability and Resilience: Can education deliver?

**Sub-themes:**

i. **Education for sustainable development:** Education as a key enabler for sustainable development; skills development and transitioning youth to decent work.

ii. **Building resilience through education:** Climate change and the curriculum; displacement and migration due to climate change and the challenges faced by small and atoll islands (including the role of education in weaving resilience using traditional knowledge and local culture).

iii. **Education governance & management:** Strengthening of the teaching profession and school management; issues of quality & equity; financing of education; societal barriers (including drug abuse and internet/social media); and advocacy for education strategies across the SDGs.
2. Background

2.1 Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM)

The triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM), first held in 1959, is the 2\textsuperscript{nd} largest meeting held in the Commonwealth following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). CCEMs provide Commonwealth education ministers with the opportunity to discuss key education issues in the Commonwealth in relation to a specific theme. At CCEMs, ministers also share knowledge and good practices in the education sector, receive an update on actions achieved against prior CCEM mandates as well as identify priorities for action for the next three years for education in the Commonwealth.

The 19\textsuperscript{th} Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19CCEM), ‘Quality education for equitable development: performance, paths and productivity’, was hosted by The Bahamas in June 2015. The conference was attended by over 700 delegates from 38 Commonwealth countries and closely preceded international agreement on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, allowing for discussions pertinent to the advancement of the SDGs.

The conference also provided an opportunity for ministers to review progress made against Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) targets; to deliberate on areas where member countries were faced with the challenge of meeting MDGs and EFA targets; and to collectively make recommendations for the continued advancement of education in the Commonwealth.

At 19CCEM, ministers agreed on actions for the strengthening of education in the Commonwealth, acknowledging the need for member states to have education sector plans that assist in advancing the SDGs. Further actions and mandates emanating from 19CCEM are documented in the Nassau Declaration\textsuperscript{1}.

In order to support the implementation of 19CCEM mandates, the following initiatives have been undertaken by the Education Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat:

\hspace{1cm}2.2.1 Establishment of the Education Ministers Action Group (EMAG)

The Commonwealth Education Ministers Action Group (EMAG) was established to take forward the actions agreed at the 19CCEM (Nassau Declaration) whilst ensuring commitment to the delivery of SDG4 across the Commonwealth. The 10-member grouping is chaired by the Minister of Education, The Bahamas (19CCEM host). Two meetings of the EMAG have been convened to, among other things, review progress made against 19CCEM mandates which is documented in the Nassau Declaration Action Plan (see Appendix 1).

\hspace{1cm}2.2.2 Establishment of the Commonwealth Accelerated Development Mechanism for Education (CADME) Technical Working Group (TWG)

The CADME TWG reports to the EMAG and was convened to assist with the implementation of the SDGs in Commonwealth member countries through the development of policy frameworks and toolkits as well as strategies to support partnership building and the mobilisation of resources. The CADME TWG comprises of senior officials from 10 EMAG member countries and representatives of the international organisations, the Commonwealth’s civil society organisations and other education stakeholders. Two meetings of the CADME TWG have been convened which saw participation from the 10 EMAG countries, civil society and international partners.

\hspace{1cm}2.2.3 Development of Policy Frameworks:

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Commonwealth Education Policy Framework (CEPF)

The CEPF aims to enable countries to align their education policies, or where appropriate develop education policies that address the SDGs, in particular SDG4. The framework encompasses a life-course perspective and incorporates the following:

- **four cornerstones**: these are the guiding principles that drive a Commonwealth view of what constitutes a good education system: quality, equitable access, relevance and sustainability;
- **four enablers**: these are aspects of processes and systems that are crucial to effective policies: governance, knowledge, advocacy and capacity; and
- **six elements**: these are educational subsystems: early childhood care and education, primary education, secondary education, technical and vocational skills, tertiary education and adult education and learning.

The CEPF was adopted by the EMAG in January 2017.

Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for Enabling the Sustainable Development Goals (CCF4SDGs)

The Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for Enabling the Sustainable Development Goals has been developed to support member countries to address the 17 SDGs through education. The Framework aims to be a flexible, non-prescriptive tool that follows a competency development model through a combination of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. It also aims to enable the delivery of the SDGs by ensuring that individuals have the relevant skills, knowledge, values and attitudes for social, economic and environmental development, working in partnership to create peaceful societies. The Framework can support the design, delivery and evaluation of national curricula across the Commonwealth; set the foundations for research and development; provide consistency across programmes for achieving the SDGs as well as support the creation of learning and evaluation tools to align with the Framework.

The Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for Enabling the Sustainable Development Goals was also adopted by the EMAG in January 2017.

2.2.4 Development of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Self-Assessment Toolkit

The TVET Self-Assessment Toolkit was developed to help countries compare and review their TVET policies which will enable practitioners to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps within their TVET systems. The Toolkit is based on a flexible approach with guidelines for implementation at a small or a large state or at a provincial level.

2.2.5 Policy Toolkit and Guidelines for Improving Boys’ Education Achievement

The policy toolkit and guidelines are intended to assist national policy makers, non-sector experts and other relevant stakeholders to establish a coherent set of sector policies and a cross-sectoral policy framework that will support boys’ educational achievement and engagement in active citizenship at country/national level. The objective is to improve the learning outcomes of boys, curb the school dropout rate and shape healthy outcomes and wellbeing.

2.2.6 Establishment of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Task Force

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2 SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics)
The CSFP Task Force was established to examine the importance of the Commonwealth Scholarships brand to the Commonwealth and its member countries, with a view to strengthening the scheme. In light of this, the Task Force proposed specific recommendations for improving the CSFPs in the Commonwealth. These recommendations were endorsed by the EMAG in January 2017.

2.2.7 The Commonwealth Education Hub

The Commonwealth Education Hub was launched at the 19CCEM to provide an integrated and user-friendly ‘one-stop-shop’ supporting education policy makers and professionals across the Commonwealth to connect, consult and collaborate more effectively, and to share and access relevant knowledge. Since July 2015 total usage of the Education Hub has reached 20,375 individuals. The Commonwealth Education Hub currently connects more than 850 participants from across 52 commonwealth countries through a community of practice mail group.

2.2 About the Host Government

Fiji is a major player in the Pacific as is home to many regional Pacific institutions and international organisations. The country recently co-chaired the UN Ocean Conference held on 5-9 June 2017. In November, Fiji will take over the Presidency of the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), informally known as COP23. Both initiatives outline the increasing leadership role undertaken by Fiji in the global arena.

The hosting of 20CCEM will be led by the Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts (MOE), Fiji under the leadership of the Minister for Education, Heritage & Arts. The Honourable Minister will serve as Chair of 20CCEM.

Education development in Fiji is focused on the achievement of ‘A knowledge-based society’, as defined in the People’s Charter of Fiji. To attain this goal, the education system has undergone a series of reforms. One of Fiji’s greatest achievements in the last decade was the reformulation of tertiary education, which led to the establishment of the Fiji National University. Other government initiatives have facilitated the enhancement of educational opportunities in schools throughout Fiji with an emphasis on access, retention, alleviation of poverty and the realisation of national and international education goals. Education, which receives the largest proportion of the national budget, continues to be a strategic priority area for the government.

The vision of the MOE, ‘Quality Education of Change, Peace and Progress’, outlines the ministry’s commitment to an education system that is holistic and empowering so that all children are able to fully realise and appreciate their inheritance and potential contribution to peaceful and sustainable national development in Fiji. This vision demonstrates the MOE’s commitment to attaining Goal 4 of the SDGs.

2.3 Issues and challenges faced by Commonwealth member countries

20CCEM will be the first CCEM to be held after the approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The timing of 20CCEM is particularly significant, as it will provide an opportunity for member countries to: a) review their progress in relation to the SDGs; b) collectively find strategies to address education challenges across the Commonwealth; and c) share and adopt good practices that exist within the Commonwealth.

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3 Association of Commonwealth Universities. About the CSFP. Retrieved from: https://www.acu.ac.uk/scholarships/commonwealth-scholarships/about-csfp

Since the SDGs have been rolled out there are still considerable gaps within the Commonwealth that require urgent attention. These include:

- **Low early childhood education enrolment rates** - while enrolment in early childhood education is expanding across the Commonwealth, currently only one third of children in developing Commonwealth countries access early childhood education;
- **Low primary and secondary school enrolment rates** - approximately 17 million primary aged children and 16 million lower secondary aged youth remain out of school in the Commonwealth;
- **High adult illiteracy** - over 400 million adults in the Commonwealth are illiterate;
- **Continued gender disparities in primary and secondary schooling** - although gender discrimination towards girls has improved, approximately 3 per cent more boys than girls are enrolled in primary schools across Commonwealth countries. Notwithstanding this, in some countries, boys are underrepresented and underperforming, particularly at the secondary level; and
- **Disparities in the allocation of resources to education** - despite the Nassau declaration reaffirmed commitment to education financing at 4-6% of GDP (or 15-20% of total public expenditure), considerable disparities remain in the allocation of resources to education within the Commonwealth.

Specific challenges faced within the Pacific region, which may also be common to other Commonwealth Small States, include:

- The lack of readily available primary data;
- Teacher quality;
- The challenges associated with urbanisation; and
- The peculiar challenges faced by smaller countries such as Tuvalu, Nauru and Tokelau as well as the Atoll Islands.

Other challenges faced within the wider global context include:

- Small states make up approximately 60% of the Commonwealth’s members and will be disproportionately affected by climate change, despite being the least contributors;
- Both the health and education sectors face a challenge in raising adequate funds to meet current demands and the ambitions of the post-2015 agenda;
- Despite the significant progress made within education provision, there remains much work to be done. Increasing funding to education alone is insufficient; and
- Rising youth unemployment is one of the most significant problems facing economies and societies in today’s world, for developed and developing countries alike. In particular attaining decent work is a significant challenge for youth.

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5 Commonwealth Secretariat. 2015. Education in the Commonwealth: Quality Education for Equitable Development
8 The Commonwealth Secretariat. 2016. Policy Brief: A sustainable, cost-effective approach to delivering education policy for the SDGs
3. Progressing towards 20CCEM

3.1 20CCEM theme and sub-themes

The 20CCEM theme ‘Sustainability and Resilience: Can education deliver?’ acknowledges the centrality of education and its importance in driving all of the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The theme and associated sub-themes are reflective of the priorities, specific needs and challenges faced by member countries.

The conference theme on sustainability and resilience is especially relevant to the prevailing global dialogue on climate change and the capacity of education systems to deal with the challenges brought on by climate change. 20CCEM will be particularly important as it will be the first CCEM to be held following global adoption of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, 20CCEM will provide an opportune moment for education ministers to discuss progress against SDG4 targets, as well as to find solutions to challenges facing education systems in the Commonwealth. Education ministers can also utilise this opportunity to deliberate on how the commitments made at 20CCEM can be brought to the attention of Commonwealth heads of government at the next Commonwealth Summit in April 2018.

In order to ensure the relevance of the meeting to global mandates whilst simultaneously assisting members to formulate national policy response strategies and frameworks, the core sectoral issues (sub-themes) that have emerged as central to the 20CCEM theme include:

i. **Education for sustainable development:** Education as a key enabler for sustainable development; skills development and transitioning youth to decent work.

ii. **Building resilience through education:** Climate change and the curriculum; displacement and migration due to climate change and the challenges faced by small and atoll islands (including the role of education in weaving resilience using traditional knowledge and local culture).

iii. **Education governance & management:** Strengthening of the teaching profession and school management; issues of quality and equity; financing of education; societal barriers (including drug abuse and internet/social media); and advocacy for education strategies across the SDGs.

3.2 20CCEM Documents: Thematic Issues Paper, SDG4 Status Update and Other Papers

The Commonwealth Secretariat has initiated the development of two key reports to present to ministers of education: (1) the Thematic Issues Paper and (2) the SDG4 Status Update Report. The content of these reports is briefly outlined below.

The 20CCEM Thematic Issues Paper will be presented to delegates attending the conference and will cover the conference theme and sub-themes (education for sustainable development; building resilience through education; and education governance and management). In this regard, the paper will draw attention to the intended focus and scope of substantive issues that the conference will address. The Paper will.

The SDG4 Status Update Report will also be presented to delegates attending the conference and will provide a snapshot of education in all 52 member countries. The report will present valuable data and analysis to member countries on their progress on SDG4 since the implementation of the new global education agenda in September 2015.

In addition to the documents above, the following will be presented for the consideration of ministers at 20CCEM:

- Reports from:
The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
- The Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)
- The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF)
- The Commonwealth Secretariat’s Education team on its 2015 - 2018 Work Programme

4. Objectives of 20CCEM

The overall goal of 20CCEM is to advance the attainment of inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all across the commonwealth. In line with the conference theme, one of the primary objectives of 20CCEM will be to address and define mechanisms through which education systems across the Commonwealth can enable sustainable development and address major global challenges, such as climate change.

Climate change is a major issue for many Commonwealth countries, approximately 60% of whom are small states. It is also a concern for the Commonwealth’s large but climate vulnerable member states. Fiji, as host of 20CCEM, has seen its education system disrupted due to the adverse effects of climate change. For example, in February 2016 the passage of Cyclone Winston, one of the strongest tropical cyclones in the South Hemisphere, left structural damage to over 200 schools across the island.

Given the climate vulnerability of Commonwealth member countries and the increasing recognition of the role that education can play in addressing climate issues, it is important that 20CCEM thoroughly addresses strategies to build the resilience and capacity of education systems to address this global concern. For instance, a key area that will be explored at 20CCEM is how appropriate skills, knowledge and values can be imparted onto Commonwealth citizens so that they effectively contribute to climate change mitigation, support the green economy and contribute to the sustainable development of their respective countries, and by extension the Commonwealth.

Drawing on the sustainable development agenda, delegates at 20CCEM will have the opportunity to engage in a focused, evidence-based debate on how best to improve the relevance of education to sustainable development. In addition, the conference will review the challenges faced in the delivery of education in the Commonwealth, including issues related to overall education governance, and will prioritise strategies for addressing them.

In light of the above, the main objectives of 20CCEM are to:

- Outline the commitments and reforms needed to facilitate inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning in the Commonwealth and agree key messages to be communicated to heads of government convening at the 2018 Commonwealth Summit; and
- Agree on actions to address specific issues affecting education systems in strengthening sustainable development and building resilience across the Commonwealth.

At 20CCEM, ministers will also receive progress reports and updates on the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Education Team, the Commonwealth of Learning, the Commonwealth Scholarships & Fellowship Plan (CSFP), and the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF).

5. Outcomes of 20CCEM

The key outcomes of the 20CCEM are envisaged as:

- Heads of Government agree to the provision of adequate domestic financing for education in line with international benchmarks (4 - 6 percent of GDP and/or at least 15 to 20 percent of total public expenditure) in the outcome statement of the 2018 Commonwealth Summit and support the role of the Commonwealth Secretariat in providing technical assistance for strengthening of education systems and;
Ministers and education stakeholders agree to implement specific actions, to be noted in the Fiji Declaration, that advance inclusive equitable quality education and promote sustainable development in the Commonwealth.

6. **20CCEM programme**

The diagram below provides a draft high level overview of the 20CCEM programme taking place over the period 19-23 February 2018.

![Figure 1: 20CCEM draft programme](image)

The ministerial programme comprises of the following main elements:

6.1 **Resilience qualifications side event**

This half-day meeting on the Professionalization of the Resilience sector is an official side event for 20CCEM and will be held two days before the formal commencement of 20CCEM. It will be a high-level meeting for senior government officials across the Commonwealth to deliberate on the prospect of developing Resilience qualifications in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. Experiences from the Pacific region in developing and accrediting Resilience qualifications will be shared with other countries in the Commonwealth, in particular small and climate vulnerable nations who are facing similar threats from climate change and natural hazards who may be interested in offering and accrediting these qualifications. The meeting will be co-hosted by the European Union’s Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training initiative (EU PacTVET) and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

6.2 **Pre-20CCEM EMAG**

A brief meeting of the EMAG specifically focussed on the outcomes of 20CCEM will be held before the formal commencement of 20CCEM. This will be the final EMAG meeting under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education, The Bahamas before handing over to incoming chair, the Minister of Education, Heritage and Arts, Fiji.
6.3 Senior Officials Meeting

The Senior Officials’ Meeting will also be held prior to the formal commencement of 20CCEM on Tuesday 20th February 2018 and will provide senior officials from the ministries of education of Commonwealth countries with the opportunity to meet and discuss relevant issues in relation to the 20CCEM theme. The principal purpose of the meeting is to review the documents, reports and work plans that will be presented to ministers during the ministerial meeting. These include the reports and work plans of - the Commonwealth Secretariat Education Team; the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF). A report on the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) will be also be considered at this meeting.

In their deliberations senior officials will also consider the following:

- 20CCEM focus, structure, procedures and anticipated outcomes;
- 20CCEM Thematic Issues Paper and SDG4 Status Update Report;
- Mandates from 19CCEM, EMAG, CADME, CSFP Taskforce, Education Hub and the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF);
- Referrals and written submissions from other Commonwealth meetings;
- The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan; and
- The Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards.

The deliberations from this meeting will be compiled in a report which will be presented to education ministers at the ministerial meeting.

6.4 Small States Forum

The Small States Forum was an innovation of the 19CCEM and will once again be convened at the 20CCEM due to its uniqueness in that it serves as an avenue to prioritize the challenges faced by small states in the Commonwealth, which comprise approximately 60% of its membership. Some of the challenges faced by small states which have implications for their education systems are migration, greater vulnerability to climate change, high debt levels and marginalization in the international arena. Notwithstanding this, the forum will also allow for the successes of Commonwealth small states to be highlighted such as the significant advances made with regards to universal primary education and the prominent global role taken by countries such as Fiji to address the threat of climate change.

6.5 Ministerial Meeting

The ministerial meeting will convene over three days and is restricted to ministers of education across the Commonwealth, their designated representative(s) and invited observers. Two keynote speakers will address ministers on a topic in line with the prevailing theme. During the ministerial meeting sessions, ministers will among other things:

- Discuss each of the conference’s technical issues, within the context of the 20CCEM theme;
- Receive an update on achievements and outcomes attained against the mandates that were set at the 19CCEM;
- Receive a global update on SDG4 with subsequent discussions to follow;
- Receive an update on the Commonwealth’s progress on SDG4 with subsequent discussion to follow;
- Receive a statement from the representative of the Integrated Partners’ Forum; and
- Deal with procedural matters related to the work of Commonwealth intergovernmental agencies in education.

At the closing of 20CCEM, Ministers will issue a ministerial declaration that outlines a clear set of commitments for member states and sets out education priorities and agenda for the next three years across the Commonwealth. Based on this declaration, the Commonwealth Secretariat will facilitate the
development of a Fiji Action Plan and support its follow-up, with oversight from EMAG.

6.5.1 Ministerial Roundtables

Ministers will also have the opportunity to participate in ministerial roundtables on skills for development, education for climate change mitigation, and education systems and governance.

6.5.1.1 Skills for development (Roundtable 1)

Education 2030 devotes considerable attention to technical and vocational skills development, specifically regarding access to affordable quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); the acquisition of technical and vocational skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship; the elimination of gender disparity and ensuring access for the vulnerable.

The process of graduating from education to employment, and from dependent to independent living, is a crucial part of the life course, as young people become adults and are accepted as such by the state and society. However, recent estimates from the World Bank suggest that 250–300 million young people are unemployed or idle, and another 150–200 million young people around the world are in unpaid or poorly paid work.

Given that 60% of the Commonwealth is under the age of 30, and there are over 400 million illiterate adults across the Commonwealth, skills development is an important issue that must be addressed. Moreover, with the prospect of 15-60 million new jobs being created globally over the next two decades through the transition to green economies and climate resilient societies, there is an added case for skills development so that learners across the Commonwealth can effectively support this transition.

Purpose of Roundtable 1:
- To allow ministers the opportunity to discuss the challenges as well as opportunities associated with skills development in their respective countries and across the Commonwealth; and
- To enable Commonwealth education ministers to share best practices and devise solutions that will ensure that the relevant knowledge and skills are imparted onto Commonwealth citizens to support the SDGs as well as the transition to green economies.

Expected outcome(s)
- Commonwealth ministers have a better understanding of the challenges associated with skills development and commit to adopting strategies, taking into consideration local context, that can be scaled up to address these challenges;
- Increased awareness among Commonwealth education ministers on the need to prioritise skills development, including TVET, to ensure that all learners, inclusive of youth, are able to transition into employment, decent jobs or entrepreneurship; and
- Commitment gained from Commonwealth member countries to review their TVET systems to support the green economy as well as skills development among youth and adults in line with SDG4 targets.

6.4.1.2 Education for climate change mitigation (Roundtable 2)

Climate change, extreme weather patterns and other environmental risks are considered one of the greatest threats to current and future generations. Education is an essential element of the global response to climate change. It helps young people understand and address the impact of global warming.

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12 Ibid
encourages changes in their attitudes and behaviour and helps them adapt to climate change-related trends\textsuperscript{14}. At the 19CCEM, Ministers of Education acknowledged the role of education in building resilience and the key role it plays in combatting issues of vulnerability, particularly those faced by small states. Many Commonwealth countries are not only small states but climate vulnerable states and thus there is a need to pay greater attention to the impact that climate change is having on education systems across the Commonwealth.

**Purpose of Roundtable 2**

- To reiterate the threat posed by climate change to education systems across the Commonwealth;
- To provide education ministers with the technical capacity to better understand the role of education in climate change mitigation; and
- To enable member countries to assess how education systems across the Commonwealth can become more climate resilient. This includes reviewing national curricula to ensure that it facilitates the development of the necessary knowledge, skills and values to address climate change and globalisation.

**Expected outcome(s)**

- Commonwealth education ministers reiterate the threat posed by climate change and increase their commitment to address this through education systems strengthening; and
- Commonwealth education ministers commit to undertaking a reorientation and renewal of their national curricula so that it takes into consideration major global challenges such as climate change.

**6.4.1.3 Education governance and management**

Governance is a critical factor in enabling conditions for quality learning and overcoming inequalities in education\textsuperscript{15}. The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework (CEPF) highlights governance as one of the four enablers that must be in place to support the development and subsequent implementation of policy prescriptions designed to meet the SDG4 targets. At the system level, governance determines what education policies and priorities will be put in place, funding available to education and how these resources will be used, managed and accounted for\textsuperscript{16}. At the institutional level, governance ensures the deployment of qualified, motivated and accountable personnel (e.g. teachers and leaders/managers) and ensures that learners are provided with high quality and relevant curriculum materials\textsuperscript{17}.

Another crucial aspect of governance is accountability. The CEPF highlights that many countries, in light of serious budgetary constraints, are under pressure to provide education more effectively and efficiently, at the same time doing so more equitably. The increasing importance of accountability is also acknowledged globally and will be addressed in the 2017/18 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report entitled ‘Accountability and education: Meeting our commitments’.

In addition, the CEPF advances the notion of political will as an important aspect of the governance process. At 19CCEM, ministers acknowledged the importance of critical stakeholders in the governance process - teachers, civil society, parents and youth and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening linkages in these areas. This is important as these various group play an essential role in the decision-making and learning process.

A failure to have good governance structures in place can contribute to poor education quality and


\textsuperscript{16} ibid

\textsuperscript{17} ibid
ineffective learning experiences.\(^{18}\)

**Purpose of Roundtable 3**

- To assess what mechanisms are in place across Commonwealth education systems that enable transparency, accountability and improved learning outcomes to support the attainment of SDG4 targets;
- To re-emphasise the need for adequate financing (at least 4 to 6 percent of GDP and/or at least 15 to 20 percent of total public expenditure) to be directed towards the education sector;
- To discuss strategies for improving teaching standards, addressing teacher remuneration and monitoring teacher performance to ensure a professional workforce;
- To discuss strategies that can be adopted to strengthen commitment to partnerships and cooperation among key education stakeholders (teachers, parents, civil society, private sector etc) to enable the delivery of SDG4 targets; and
- To inform ministers of the latest findings of the 2017/18 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report ‘Accountability and education: Meeting our commitments’.

**Expected outcome(s)**

- Commonwealth education ministers will commit to making additional steps towards reaching international benchmarks for education financing, that is, 4 to 6 percent of GDP and/or at least 15 to 20 percent of total public expenditure;
- Commonwealth education ministers will have a better understanding of how to strengthen partnerships with key education stakeholders based on Commonwealth best practices shared at CCEM, to support SDG4 delivery; and
- Commonwealth education ministers will advance a position on administering the efficient governance of education.

### 7. Integrated Partners Forum

Concurrent to the ministerial meeting, teachers, civil society members, higher education leaders and students will meet for the Integrated Partners Forum (IPF). The forum will provide an opportunity for the wider education community across the Commonwealth to meet, network and exchange ideas; engage in dialogue; and communicate their priorities to ministers, in relation to the 20CCEM theme. The Commonwealth education community includes representatives from national and international agencies, academia, higher education leaders, teachers, NGOs, youth/students and the private sector, engaged in education at all levels in the Commonwealth.

The IPF will deliberate on the main theme and associated sub-themes that will allow equal space for discussions by the individual groups. There will be opportunities for IPF representatives to meet and engage with Commonwealth ministers and senior government officials. At the end of the forum, IPF partners will present a joint Statement to the Commonwealth education ministers detailing their shared recommendations for education across the Commonwealth.

While prior CCEMs have held separate forums for civil society stakeholders, higher education leaders, students and teachers, the 20CCEM steering committee agreed that this will take the form of an integrated forum at 20CCEM. This decision was made in order to circumvent the logistical and operational challenges that were foreseen in having separate forums, as is customary, at the 20CCEM. Also, this format will allow for greater collaboration among the various groups who each have an important role in helping Commonwealth education ministers attain the SDG4 targets.

#### 7.1 Objectives of the IPF

- To provide a platform for key education stakeholders - civil society, higher education leaders, teachers and students - to deliberate and advance solutions under the context of the 20CCEM theme ‘Sustainability and Resilience: Can education deliver?’;

\(^{18}\) Ibid
To provide an opportunity for delegates of the IPF to outline their respective commitments for civil society, higher education, teachers and youth in the Commonwealth over the next three years, in line with the Commonwealth’s Charter and the prevailing international education agenda; and

To provide a space for delegates of the IPF to interact with ministers, allowing them the opportunity to share their concerns and priorities for education across the Commonwealth.

A working group overseeing the delivery of the IPF has been convened and members will be responsible for, inter alia, putting together the programme for the IPF. The working group will see representation from the Commonwealth Secretariat (Youth Division), the Commonwealth Teachers Group, Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC), Fiji Teachers Union and Association, the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (PIANGO), the University of South Pacific (USP), the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and selected accredited Commonwealth CSOs.

8. Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards

The Fifth Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards were launched in 2016. The purpose of these awards are to showcase the innovative and successful education and learning initiatives that are being conducted in Commonwealth countries. By recognising excellence and innovation, the Secretariat hopes to support member countries in their endeavours, highlight the great work of education professionals and signal the key role of education and learning in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

A good practice submission must be a policy, programme, project or strategy that has made a positive difference to learners whether children, young people or adults, or to the education system of a Commonwealth member country in respect of one or more of the five categories for 2018. The categories are:

- **Category 1**: Eliminating gender disparities in education, especially for girls and women;
- **Category 2**: Delivering quality education and learning in difficult circumstances;
- **Category 3**: Education and learning to improve employment opportunities for young people;
- **Category 4**: Education as a powerful response to climate change; and
- **Category 5**: Education and pathways to peace.

Any organisation, whether public or private, including Commonwealth ministries of education, educational institutions and civil society organisations advising in or delivering education and learning in Commonwealth countries can nominate themselves or be nominated. The formal and non-formal education sectors span from early childhood education to adult education, including primary, secondary and tertiary education, technical and vocational education and training, and skills development.

Applications are assessed according to the following criteria: relevance, innovation, measurable impact, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness, knowledge exchange and participation, and replication.

Winners will be awarded at the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM) in Fiji in 2018. There will be two winners across the designated categories including an award for the finalist with the strongest teacher professional development component in honour of the late Steve Sinnott, former General Secretary of the United Kingdom National Union of Teachers, known as the Steve Sinnott Award.

9. Exhibition

Exhibitions at CCEM provide an opportunity to showcase educational innovations, products, services and publications that highlight the range of activities and initiatives taking place across the Commonwealth. At 20CCEM, the exhibition space will be handled by the host government and provision will be made for 40 exhibition stands of various sizes. The figure below depicts the area earmarked for the 20CCEM exhibition.
10. Conclusion

One of the Commonwealth’s greatest strengths is its convening power. For 58 years, since CCEM was first held in 1959, the Secretariat has consistently and successfully brought together education ministers from across the Commonwealth to deliberate as well as advance solutions on key global education issues that have an impact for education delivery in the Commonwealth. The hosting of 20CCEM in Nadi, Fiji will be no different. This is the first CCEM to be held after the international community committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Education ministers attending 20CCEM will have a tremendous opportunity to set the stage for a refocus and recommitment to the education agenda outlined in the SDGs, that is SDG4. Under the theme ‘Sustainability and Resilience: Can education deliver?’ ministers will address issues such as climate change, building resilience through education, education governance and management and education for sustainable development, which ties in to the SDG4 agenda. The final Ministerial Declaration will outline the education priorities and agenda for the next three years across the Commonwealth.
# Appendix 1

## 2nd Education Ministers Action Group (EMAG) Meeting, 19-20 January 2017

### Nassau Declaration – Action Plan (19CCEM 2015 to 20CCEM 2018)

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Areas to Advance</th>
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</table>
| 1   | Spirit of sharing/spirit of giving | • Share good practice | • Good practices from Education Hub discussions are collated into a summative report, which is placed on the website and disseminated to Ministry of Education officials of Commonwealth member countries | Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub | Series | Ongoing - The following e-Discussions were held and summary reports published:  
✓ The Role of Education and Health in Female Genital Mutilation  
✓ Evidence and Quality Standards in Education  
✓ Funding Education - The role of scholarships, bursaries and other mechanisms  
✓ Increasing Access to Education - Overcoming Barriers  
✓ Changing patterns in boys’ education achievement  
✓ Education’s response to radicalisation  
✓ Exploring Sustainable Development Goal 4  
✓ Engaging young people in health and education policy in Commonwealth Countries  
✓ The role of education in propelling climate action  
✓ How can quality education for all be financed? |

<p>|  | • Partnerships and resources | • EMAG Chair to attend the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting (CFMM) | Education Ministers Action Group (EMAG)/Commonwealth Accelerated Development | Oct 2016 | The EMAG Chair was unable to attend CFMM. However, messages were developed for inclusion in the papers and speaking points prepared for CFMM |</p>
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| 1   | Mechanism for Education (CADME) | Invite donors and partners to CADME meetings | EMAG and CADME | Jun 2016 and Oct 2016 | The following international partners attended the 1st CADME held on 8-9 June 2016:  
- British Council  
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)  
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)  
- Comic Relief  
- Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)  
- Department for International Development (DFID)  
- Education International  

The 2nd CADME was successfully held on 19-21 October 2016 which saw continued interest/attendance from international partners mentioned above. |
|     |                 |          |              |             | Jan 2017 | The 2nd EMAG was held on 19-20 January 2017. The following agencies presented at the meeting:  
- Global Partnership for Education (GPE)  
- Harvard University Ministerial Leadership Program |
<p>|     |                 | Invite donors to present at the 2nd EMAG meeting | EMAG |               |          |                        |
| 2   | Cross-Commonwealth education development | Request contributions from partners to enable delivery of actions advanced in the Nassau Declaration | Commonwealth Secretariat/EMAG/CADME | Jun 2016 and Oct 2016 | CADME Strategies for Partnership Building and Resource Mobilisation was developed and delivered in November 2016 following discussions held at the 1st and 2nd CADME meetings held in June and October 2016. The document was distributed to EMAG members in January 2017 |
|     |                 | Convene meetings of the CADME to chart the way forward on resource mobilisation and partnerships |               |          |                        |</p>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>collaboration and networks</td>
<td>• Commonwealth mobility</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat/Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC)</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Ongoing: ✓ Initial partners meeting held in April 2016 ✓ With the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Ministers taking place in February 2018, monthly partners meetings will take place in the lead up to 20CCEM. The first meeting was held in February 2017</td>
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<td>• Strengthen education outcomes with Commonwealth partners through regular engagement</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat/Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC)</td>
<td>Jul 2016</td>
<td>✓ The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and Nasir Kazmi, Education Adviser attended the conference. The Secretary-General was the guest speaker at the gala dinner and also participated in a ministerial panel discussion</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Policy frameworks</td>
<td>Develop policy tools and legislative framework: • Commonwealth Education Policy Framework (CEPF) • Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals</td>
<td>• Hold a Pan-Commonwealth Consultation on the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>✓ The Pan-Commonwealth Consultation was held in Nairobi, Kenya on 3-5 May 2016. There was participation by 13 senior officials from Ministries of Education across all five (5) Commonwealth regions</td>
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<td>• Refine the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework at the CADME meeting</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat</td>
<td>Jun 2016</td>
<td>✓ Following the Pan-Commonwealth Consultation the CEPF was revised and presented to the 1st CADME TWG on 9th June 2016. Further feedback on the CEPF was received and the document was further refined</td>
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<td>• Develop 1st Edition Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for the SDGs and Commonwealth Education Policy Framework</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat</td>
<td>Oct. 2016</td>
<td>✓ 1st Edition of the Frameworks was completed in time for presentation at the EMAG</td>
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| 4   | Scholarships    | Strengthen Commonwealth Scholarships | • Convene meetings of the CSFP taskforce to devise a way forward for strengthening Commonwealth Scholarships | Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Taskforce | Jan 2017 | Completed  
✓ 1st meeting of the CSFP Taskforce held on January 20th 2016  
✓ EMAG Chair sent a letter in March 2016 to selected Commonwealth member countries requesting contributions to Commonwealth Scholarships  
✓ 2nd meeting held on July 26th 2016  
✓ Final meeting held on October 18th 2016  
✓ The report and recommendations emanating from the CSFP Taskforce was presented to the EMAG in January 2017 and subsequently adopted by the EMAG |
| 5   | Research collaboration s | Establish Research Consortium and Chair | • Update on process to be provide by Government of India | Government of India | Ongoing | ✓ An update was provided at the EMAG held in January 2017. India noted that it is now in the process of appointing a Research Consortium Chair. The delegate from India communicated that further details will be provided once formal processes have been completed |
| 6   | ICT and Teachers | Collaborations with the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF) in Malaysia | • Initiate discussions with CTEF to moderate Education Hub discussion, re quality standards  
• Partner with CTEF, re Commonwealth Quality Standards for Education  
• Create space for CTEF to report on its work to EMAG and CADME members | CTEF | Ongoing | ✓ CTEF moderated the eDiscussion on quality standards in education  
✓ Background paper developed  
✓ CTEF is also currently refining the definitions, re criteria for quality education |
<p>|     |                  |          |              |             |          | ✓ Prof. Morshidi Sirat, Director, CTEF, made a presentation to the 1st CADME TWG on the work of the organisation. subsequent update on the work of the CTEF was made at the 2nd EMAG in January 2017 |</p>
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<td></td>
<td>Innovations in ICT</td>
<td>• Leverage use of Hubs to promote ICT innovations</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub/COL</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>✓ The Education Hub platform continues to highlight news and innovations as well as support working groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distance learning</td>
<td>• Launch two (2) tools on the Education Hub i. Thousands of wide ranging free courses from institutions across the world ii. Online catalogue of qualifications offered by institutions across the Commonwealth</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub</td>
<td>Jun 2016</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>✓ The search mechanism for free educational content is available via the Education Hub: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/jlztznd">http://tinyurl.com/jlztznd</a> ✓ The online guide of courses offered in Commonwealth countries was published and now includes 25 countries: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/hsag9at">http://tinyurl.com/hsag9at</a></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Looking to the future</td>
<td>• Online discussions promoting innovation, enhancing relevance</td>
<td>• Launch discussions and collaborate with external partners to moderate discussions</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>• See No. 1 - Spirit of sharing/spirit of giving</td>
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</table>
| 8-13 | Early childhood/ Gender/Parents and civil society/Role of teachers/Youth/Lifelong learning | • Mainstream in policy frameworks | • Develop the undermentioned:  
  i. Commonwealth Education Policy Framework  
  ii. Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for the SDGs | Commonwealth Secretariat | Jun 2016 (Initial drafts) | ✓ Initial drafts of the Frameworks were presented at the 1st CADME meeting in June 2016  
✓ Final drafts of the Frameworks were presented at the 2nd CADME meeting in October 2016  
✓ First Editions of both Frameworks presented and subsequently adopted by EMAG members at the 2nd EMAG held in January 2017  
 ✓ The Working Group on the Teaching Profession is supported by the Education Hub: [http://tinyurl.com/j5wu6hgk](http://tinyurl.com/j5wu6hgk) |
<p>|     |                 | • Share good practice e.g. teacher and quality standards | • Disseminate relevant information/material via the Education Hub | Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub |         | ✓ |
|     |                 | • Engagement with partners | • Strengthen education outcomes with Commonwealth partners | Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub | Apr 2016 |         |
|     |                 | • Partner Engagement Plan | | Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub | Jun 2016 |         |
|     |                 | • Policy briefs and Hub discussions | | Commonwealth Secretariat/Education Hub | Ongoing via Education Hub |         |</p>
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<td></td>
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<td>Outreach to Pacific region</td>
<td>• Mission to Fiji and Tuvalu (8-18 March 2016) to identify potential areas of technical support to Fiji that would be valuable for development</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat</td>
<td>Mar 2016</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<td>Mission to Fiji and Tuvalu (8-18 March 2016) to identify potential areas of technical support to Fiji that would be valuable for development</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Secretariat</td>
<td>Mar 2016</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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See No. 1 (Spirit of sharing/spirit of giving) for list of past Hub discussions

**Policy Briefs:**
- Financing Health and Education (December 2015). See Link ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbZEc5YjBwa1E0NFE/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbZEc5YjBwa1E0NFE/view)). Currently closed for comment
- Radicalisation, Resilience, Respect and Rehabilitation (Draft) (November 2015). See link ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbNHhXMkdoYVI3Z0E/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbNHhXMkdoYVI3Z0E/view)). Currently closed for comment
- Climate Change and Education (Draft) (December 2015). See link ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbbJXYVgXk9wUJU/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbbJXYVgXk9wUJU/view)). Currently closed for comment
- Engaging Boys for Active Citizenship (Draft) (January 2016). See link ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbMVpcnRkY3dReFU/view?usp=sharing&pref=2&pli=1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbMVpcnRkY3dReFU/view?usp=sharing&pref=2&pli=1)). Currently closed for comment
- A sustainable, cost-effective approach to delivering education policy for the SDGs (Draft) (January 2016). See link ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbZ3BfNFYtcmpzaLJ/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By8TPuCsgpbZ3BfNFYtcmpzaLJ/view?usp=sharing)). Currently closed for comment
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<tr>
<td>20th CCEM</td>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td>Benefit other member states particularly small states, and presentation and review of the Draft Commonwealth Curriculum Framework</td>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat</td>
<td>Jun 2016</td>
<td>• Joint work with Youth Division on evidence based policies on youth development in the Pacific</td>
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| 14 | 20th CCEM | Strategic direction:  
  - Relevance  
  - Quality  
  - Equity | Conduct planning missions and steering committee meetings | EMAG/CCEM Steering Committee/ Government of Fiji | Feb 2018 | Ongoing  
  - First 20CCEM Planning Mission undertaken in August 2016  
  - Second mission will take place in May 2017  
  - First 20CCEM Steering Committee Meeting held in October 2017  
  - Second 20CCEM Steering Committee Meeting will take place in June 2017 |
| 15 | Advocacy | Enhance relevance across the SGDs:  
  - Social  
  - Economic  
  - Environmental | Develop Communication Plan | Education Hub/EMAG/Commonwealth Secretariat | Sept 2015 | Completed  
  - Communication Plan developed in Sept. 2015 |
| 14 | 20th CCEM | Collate progress on actions items articulated in Nassau Declaration | Commonwealth Secretariat/CADME/Partners to deliver | Jul 2017 | Outstanding  
  - First draft due by Aug 2017 |
| 14 | 20th CCEM | Develop overview report of Nassau Declaration Action Plan to present at 20CCEM | Commonwealth Secretariat/CADME/Partners to deliver | Jul 2017 | Outstanding  
  - First draft due by Aug 2017 |
<p>| 15 | Advocacy | Hold Panel Discussions | Commonwealth Secretariat | Panel discussions held: | | |</p>
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<td>iv. Equity</td>
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<td>v. Quality</td>
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<td>• Host Hub Discussions</td>
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- Radicalisation and the role of health and education (Dec 2015)
- Global Health Security Challenges and Policy Responses (Feb 2016)

Other suggestions for hub discussions:
- ICT in schools
- Relevance of curriculum
- Quality teachers
- TVET
- Case for investing in education
- Quality
- Youth and unemployment challenges
- Pre-school
- Gender - early marriage in Africa and human rights
- Equity
- Migration, mobility and refugees
- CHOGM priorities/political relevance
- Disabilities
- Access the vulnerable, marginalised and out of school children
- Private vs. public education
- Access to tertiary education
- Small states

Ongoing. See No. 1 ‘Spirit of sharing/spirit of giving’ for list of prior hub discussions.