

Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education

Technical Meeting on Advocacy Strategy Development

Marlborough House, 18-19 September 2013

Meeting report

Foreword

The current global development framework for education has three main components: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education; the Education for All (EFA) goals; and the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). The first two expire in 2015, the last in 2014. The debate around their replacements has centred on UN processes, including the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel (HLP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Education First initiative, and UNESCO- and UNICEF-led national, regional and global consultations.

In order to influence these processes and ensure that the adopted replacement framework reflects Commonwealth priorities, a Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education was established at the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in August 2012. The Working Group met in December 2012 and produced Recommendations for the framework.

These Recommendations have formed the basis of Commonwealth Education Ministers' advocacy for education in the new global framework. Currently, there are a number of global processes geared at influencing the architecture and implementation of the adopted framework, and reports of the various consultations and initiatives are beginning to be published. It is clear that a number of issues are emerging from the debate which require particular attention.

A two day technical meeting of the Ministerial Working Group was held on 18 and 19 September 2013 in order to discuss these issues and agree with key stakeholders how to advocate for the Commonwealth Education Ministers' proposed solutions such that the Commonwealth position is reflected in the adopted global framework. The technical meeting would identify:

- a Commonwealth position on emerging issues under the post-2015 development framework;
- a strategy and road map for engaging with the global consultation processes that would help consolidate the Commonwealth recommendations;
- a mechanism for sharing progress.

This report serves as a record of the meeting. The conclusions from the meeting are attached as [Appendix 1](#) and draft Advocacy Strategy and Road Map as [Appendix 2](#).

Wednesday, 18 September 2013

1. Welcome, introduction and purpose

On behalf of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Ms Esther Eghobamien, Interim Director, Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD), Commonwealth Secretariat, extended a warm welcome to participants attending the technical meeting on advocacy strategy development for the post-2015 development framework for education. Ms Eghobamien said that the Secretary-General was aware of the meeting taking place and looked forward to seeing the recommendations agreed to by the participants. The agenda for the meeting is attached as [Appendix 3](#).

Ms Eghobamien recapped the history of development of the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group's [Recommendations](#) for the post-2015 framework for education, and the Issues Paper prepared for the technical meeting. At the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (18CCEM) in Mauritius, the Commonwealth Education Ministers agreed, on 31 August 2012, to establish a Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education. The Working Group met in December 2012 following a participatory consultation, formulated recommendations from Commonwealth countries for the post-2015 development framework. These recommendations addressed specific areas which were identified as priorities by Commonwealth education ministers, Commonwealth organisations and civil society. The final recommendations were endorsed by the Education Ministers of Commonwealth countries.

The final recommendations were then presented to representatives of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in London in December 2012. They had also been presented to UNESCO, and to a number of regional and global forums.

In 2013, various important reports had been published by organisations tasked to deliberate and consult on the post-2015 agenda. These included the reports of: the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#); the [HLP](#); the [UN Secretary-General](#), prepared for the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA); the [UN Global Compact Office](#); and the [Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Agenda](#). It had been gratifying to note that the Commonwealth's priorities were reflected in the UN outcomes, especially the principle that the new framework should be based on expanding access, reducing inequity and improving quality.

Ms Eghobamien said that it was a privilege to have the Chair of the Ministerial Working Group, Mr RP Ramlugun, Acting Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Mauritius, at this meeting and she thanked him for agreeing to be the Chair for the two day technical meeting. Thanks were also extended to all co-participants from various ministries of education (MoEs) around the Commonwealth. These included representatives from Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Jamaica (which had recently joined the Ministerial Working Group), Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Uganda. All of these countries are members of the Ministerial Working Group. Appreciation was also extended to stakeholders and to Commonwealth associations, which had been invited because they were both professional partners of the Commonwealth Secretariat and were key stakeholders and had technical expertise in their own right.

Ms Eghobamien stated that the global discourse around post-2105 had highlighted a number of major emerging issues with related implications for the Commonwealth position which were yet to be resolved. A Paper had been prepared for the meeting which summarised these issues ([Appendix 4](#)). The purpose of the two-day Technical Meeting was to address these concerns, deliberate on challenges and opportunities and work on strategies for promoting the Commonwealth's Recommendations (summarised in [Appendix 5](#)).

Specifically:

- The primary aim of the meeting was for technical experts to address the four key issues of: (i) an integrated post-2015 framework for education; (ii) engaging developed countries' MoEs in the new global agenda; (iii) how to address skills for employability; and (iv) how to ensure measurable, broad-based outcomes for learning.
- The Technical Group together with partners would develop an advocacy strategy and road map to ensure that the key education priorities indicated in the Commonwealth Ministers' Recommendations were reflected in the final, adopted post-2015 global framework.

In conclusion, Ms Eghobamien noted that the framework provided a basis for addressing the issues in depth, seeking a consensus and making recommendations to resolving the gaps which the issues presented.

2. Context and objectives of the Technical Meeting

The Chair said that it was a pleasure for him to be at the meeting. He welcomed participants to the meeting, and a special vote of thanks was extended to the Commonwealth Secretariat team, which had done considerable work in putting together education ministers' concerns and priorities into the [Background Paper](#) to Commonwealth Recommendations for the post-2015 Development Framework for Education, published in December 2012. He also expressed his appreciation for all the work done since then.

He explained that Mauritius was in the Chair because, at 18 CCEM when it was decided to set up the Working Group on the Post 2015 Agenda, the Minister of Education from Mauritius was asked to head the team of 13 Commonwealth Education Ministers. A round of introductions by participants followed. The list of participants is in [Appendix 6](#).

The Commonwealth priorities for education had been reflected in the Ministerial Working Group's Recommendations and the Chair assured participants that the consultations had been wide and deep among Commonwealth countries. In addition, professional advice had been sought from leading experts in the field of education. The recommendations had been well received internationally, regionally and nationally. As Mauritius was also a member of the Francophone group, the Commonwealth Recommendations had been shared with them; the group had highly approved of the recommendations and in particular, the three areas of concern: (i) expanding access; (ii) improving quality; and (iii) reducing inequity in education. Consequently, a strategy should be formulated to sustain and reflect the Commonwealth Recommendations in any forthcoming discussions with the UN, UNESCO, UNICEF and other stakeholders.

The tasks of the technical meeting were to (i) seek consensus on the four concerns reflected in the Issues Paper; and (ii) work on an advocacy strategy and road map.

The Chair said that he was delighted to welcome Dr Kishore Singh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, who had considerable experience in the field of the right to education. He was based at UNESCO, and advised a number of international, regional and national entities on aspects of the right to education. In August 2010 Dr Singh was appointed Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education at the 14th session of the Human Rights Council. He was the author of many influential reports on education as a human right.

Dr Singh said it was an honour for him to be present at the Technical Meeting on the post-2015 development framework for education. He expressed his gratitude to Commonwealth Secretariat and to the Open Society Foundations for their invitation. He said he was happy that the Mauritius communiqué reaffirmed the importance of education as a human right and especially the

centrality of education to the development process. He welcomed the UN Secretary-General's Global Initiative on Education - *Education First* - which was launched in September 2012. He informed the meeting that he had cited the Ministerial Working Group's Recommendations in his report to the forthcoming UNGA in October 2013 which was on the right to education.

He said he looked forward to the outcomes of this meeting and to continued collaboration by disseminating the outcomes at various international conferences.

3. Update on the Ministerial Working Group's Recommendations

Dr Pauline Greaves, Head, Education Section, STPD, presented an overview of the Recommendations. She extended a warm welcome and thanked participants for attending the meeting despite their busy schedules. She informed the meeting that work started 18 months ago on the post-2015 paper which was presented at 18 CCEM where it was agreed that a Ministerial Working Group should take the issues forward. The group received contributions from Commonwealth countries as well as from professional stakeholders in the field of education and training. Communication on the issues was done electronically until December 2013, when the group met in London and finalised its recommendations. The group emphasised the mutual interdependence of the post-2015 development framework goals and that a multi-sectoral approach to development was required to identify key measures of performance.

Seven overarching principles had emerged from the discussions within the Commonwealth:

- i. Integration of the EFA and education MDGs: the new framework should aim for an alignment and integration between the education MDGs and EFA goals. There was mutual interdependence between these two goals and this should be emphasised.
- ii. Structure: The goals should be limited and should focus on outputs. Outputs should be measurable within existing reporting structures.
- iii. Focus on learning: There should be contextualisable measures for learning outcomes in addition to retaining the goal to increase access to education.
- iv. Differentiation: The post-2015 framework should avoid the 'one size fits all' approach to allow regions and individual nations to set goals which were both appropriate and manageable within their own context.
- v. Global relevance: The MDGs and EFA goals were generally interpreted to apply to low or middle-income countries, but the scope should be expanded to include *all* countries.
- vi. Quality with equity: An overarching inclusive strategy for education was required to combat all forms of disadvantage and discrimination.
- vii. Sustainability: Sensitivity to the issues of socio-economic and environment capacity should be encapsulated in all goals.

Having followed a public consultation and considering the achievements and challenges of the MDGs and EFA targets, the 54 countries of the Commonwealth identified the following priorities for education and training:

- The education components of the MDG framework and the EFA framework should be aligned into one post-MDGs framework for education.
- The new framework should be designed around two levels of goals - principal and subordinate.
- The post-MDGs should contain three principal goals (identified below).
- The post-EFA would contain six subordinate goals (identified below).
- Targets and deadlines would focus on 2025 but options would be available for individual

countries, depending on starting point, ambition and capacity.

- The three concepts of access, equity and quality should run through all aspects of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new framework. The details of these would be identified in the subordinate goals.

The three principal goals for education (part of the MDGs goals) would comprise of:

1. Every child completes a full cycle of a minimum of 9 years of continuous, free basic education and demonstrates learning achievement consistent with national standards.
2. Post-basic education be expanded strategically to meet the needs for knowledge and skills related to employment and livelihoods.
3. Reduce and seek to eliminate differences in educational outcomes among learners associated with household wealth, gender, special needs, location, age and social group.

The six subordinate goals relating to access, quality and equity (form part of the EFA goals) would consist of:

- i. Reduce and seek to eliminate early childhood under-nutrition and avoidable childhood disease, and universalise access to community based ECE and ECE/D and pre-school below the age of 6 years.
- ii. Universalise an 'expanded vision of access' to a full cycle of a minimum of 9 years of continuous basic education.
Successful achievement of national learning outcomes in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains for both primary and lower secondary cycles at age appropriate levels up to the age of 15 years.
- iii. Invest strategically in expanded and equitable access to post-basic and tertiary level education and training linked to wellbeing, livelihoods and employment and the transition to responsible adult citizenship.
- iv. Eliminate illiteracy and innumeracy amongst those under 50 years old.
Provide education opportunities for young people and adults who have not successfully completed 9 years of basic education.
- v. Reduce and seek to eliminate disparities in participation in education at school level linked to wealth, location, special needs, age, gender and social group and ensure all children have equal educational opportunities and reduce gaps in measured outcomes.
- vi. Provide adequate infrastructure for learning according to national norms for buildings, basic services, safety, learning materials, and learning infrastructure within appropriate distances of households.

In addition to the above there were four cross-cutting themes to be addressed by all education goals. These were:

- a. *Gender*. All reporting and evaluation of the development goals should be disaggregated by sex and analysed through a gender lens.
- b. *Education for Sustainable Development*. Education for sustainable development mainstreamed in all education policies, teacher and school leader preparation, and curricula.
- c. *Education in emergencies*. Conflict and disaster risk reduction integrated into national education sector plans.
- d. *Migration*. All migrants of school-age or who are education professionals recorded in monitoring of education goals by the host country to inform policy formulation.

Dr Greaves concluded by saying that the Commonwealth Education Ministers' recommendations

had been presented to the UN HLP and to UNESCO. She acknowledged that the goals were ambitious, vital and very important to the discussions which were taking place during the two days.

Responses and discussion

Professor Seamus Hegarty, Centre for Universal Education, the Brookings Institution, noted the need to understand better the statement that any measures should be contained within the existing frameworks. It implied that there were adequate frameworks in place in all areas of education but this was not the case. There was some measurement for numeracy and literacy but not in the area of soft skills. There was a need to develop student outcome measurement in a whole range of education fields. He also noted that, when talking about the factors that made up the differences in education, there was no mention of a very important factor - that of ethnic minorities who had been discriminated against and who constituted a large social group.

4. The post-2015 development agenda process

Mr Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Co-ordinator, Education and Employment, Education International, presented an overview of the process of developing the post-2015 global development framework. He noted that some of the strands running through the process could be termed 'expected pathways' because they had not yet been truly defined. Decisions would be taken at the UNGA the following week.

There were three strands or processes running concurrently and there was a need to seek convergence, either partially or fully.

1. The post-2015 development agenda (post-MDGs)

- In May 2012, the HLP, which had consulted with civil society, governments, businesses and other stake holders, presented its report to the UN Secretary-General. Arising from the report and other sources the SG had prepared his own report which would be presented in later September 2013 at the UNGA.
- The Education Thematic Consultation was one of the 11 thematic consultations conducted by the UN and led by UNICEF and UNESCO. The report had been released the previous week. It would be important to look at this report to see how it could enrich deliberations.
- There were also national consultations by member governments.
- Information and recommendations from these processes was available on 'The World We Want' website. Mr Sinyolo said that people should be encourage to visit the website and vote on the issues important to them. Education has so far received the highest priority. The survey was expected to run until 2015.

2. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- Also known as the Rio+20 Process, this was set up in January 2013. Mr Sinyolo noted that its report was expected in 2014 and would most probably be presented to the 2014 UNGA/MDG Summit in September 2014.
- The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development was co-chaired by Hungary and Kenya, a Commonwealth member. The Group's membership was the UN member states and therefore commanded a great deal of legitimacy.

3. The EFA Process ('EFA2'?)

- It was not clear whether there would be 'EFA2'. However, the EFA Steering Committee would be meeting in UNESCO on 17 and 18 November 2013 and was expected to discuss this option. If the answer was affirmative, terms of reference would be formulated and

adopted and a task force set up to work on the post-2015 education agenda.

- There was every possibility that there would be EFA2 and its report could be presented at the World Education Forum in Seoul, South Korea in May 2015.

Mr Sinyolo then outlined the implications of the above on the Commonwealth's position and strategy, raising a number of questions:

- If the MDG and SDF merge, how would EFA2 fit in with them? The MDGs would not have the depth and breadth of EFA because it included non-education issues. There could be only one education goal in the post-MDGs.
- Commonwealth Ministers of Education were in the forefront of enabling the three processes to converge. What would be the consequences of a convergence? What would the gains and losses be, because with a merger, the fall-back position would always be to come up with the lowest common denominator where the richness of the education issues would not be lost. In such a case, how would the Commonwealth mitigate the losses in the education goals?
- How could it be ensured that education would be included? The key lay in influencing the drafting process. The Ministerial Working Group should seek ways to shape the drafting process in all forthcoming reports because discussions about the processes would go on in 2014 and 2015.
- Commonwealth members were represented on the HLP, the Open Working Group on SDGs and in UNESCO. In addition, there were other meetings simultaneously taking place through which Commonwealth members could influence the process and outcome through other member countries.
- Such structures and processes included:
 - UNGA: Serbia was holding the presidency; Antigua and Barbuda would be next, followed by Uganda (which would coincide with the drafting stage of the post-MDGs; Uganda was a member of the Ministerial Working Group). This had put Uganda in a very influential position.
 - Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): Members needed to work with ECOSOC.
 - The Open Working Group on SDGs: Kenya was co-chair and a member of the Ministerial Working Group. Through its relevant representative, it could influence the outcome of the agenda.
 - High Level Political Forum on sustainable development: This was expected to meet soon after the September 2013 UNGA meeting. Membership included the Presidency of the GA and member states. There was a possibility that the Forum could use recommendations from the MDG summit and incorporate them into its report.
 - UN Secretary-General's Office: The Special Advisor on the post-2015 development process, Ms Amina Mohammed, was from a Commonwealth country, Nigeria, and would be involved in the drafting of proposals, which would be as important as the political adoption.
 - Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT): IATT comprised organisations including UNDP, World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO etc., and provided an opportunity for Members of the Ministerial Working Group to advocate the Recommendations.
 - Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSS): SDSS had already submitted its report, but members could still seek to influence it.
 - The Global Compact Office (GCO): The private sector, which the GCO represented, was another group to target with advocacy messages.

Mr Hugh McLean, Director, Education Support Programme, Open Society Foundations, added to

Mr Sinyolo's presentation, elaborating on issues arising from the process. He identified four issues:

1. Democracy was central to the debate

- *Who made the complex decisions on the content of goals?* Decisions could be made by interested stakeholders from countries that were well positioned to influence and advocate the goals from their point of view.
- *How could these goals be made meaningful to Commonwealth countries?* Organisations such as the Commonwealth and UNESCO had democratic constituencies through their education ministers. They should actively take advantage of their position to effect negotiations and discussions with bodies like the African Union. The Commonwealth had a head start in defining the issues and goals. A number of organisations were just starting. The Commonwealth was at the heart of the discussion.

2. Developing the best and fullest agenda for developing education was crucial

- *How could the best and fullest agenda for developing education be promulgated, one that advanced the right to education?* The Commonwealth was well positioned and close to those who were able to influence the agenda.
- *Should the Commonwealth position be shoe-horned into the MDGs and SDGs?* The MDGs were at one level and space was limited. The question was whether the Commonwealth should have a position on a single unified goal or whether there should be space for more than one education goal which bound coherently with the MDGs. This discussion should be taken forward by the education community rather than by diplomats and committees.

3. Linked to this was resourcing

- *What was the responsibility for providing resources to national governments to help them achieve their goals?* While the MDGs were not legally binding, nevertheless they had a great deal of clout and force internationally. One aspect would be for the richer countries to contribute to resourcing countries in need of assistance without dominating the development agenda.

4. Advantage of the Commonwealth position

- *How should the Commonwealth position be taken advantage of?* It was clear that the Commonwealth was very well positioned in the debate and could be a major player and strategic partner to influence the post-MDGs, ESD and EFA goals through its membership and collective voice.

Responses and discussions

Ms Eghobamien thanked the previous speakers and repeated her question as to how to make headway in getting the attention of international organisations to have unified goals. She asked the meeting to consider whether the difficulties lay in ideology, structure, conceptualisation or resourcing, or whether the process itself did not allow for any intervention. She acknowledged that it was complex but 54 countries of the Commonwealth had produced good, workable goals, and she asked participants to discuss and come up with a good strategy to market the goals. She noted that the meeting was timely - the previous speakers had alluded to the fact that Kenya, Antigua and Barbuda and Uganda would all be in prominent positions to influence the international agenda.

Jamaica noted that those involved in the drafting of the international agenda goals between 2014 and 2015 should continue to include MoEs from developing countries and specifically technical persons from these ministries. The strategy going forward should ultimately be owned by MoEs and national governments and not those who ran international bodies such as the World

Bank and similar development organisations.

Jamaica endorsed working with the bodies already mentioned, further including the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) among others. These had been involved in developing various positions and after examining them carefully to ascertain how they fitted in with the Commonwealth's own position, the Commonwealth could work with them to ensure a greater buy-in on the issues it considered important.

The MDGs and EFA goals should be unified into one overall strategy for education in the post-2015 framework. Its targets and sub-targets should ensure that there was a focus on the least developed countries, which would serve the Commonwealth well. The process of developing the goals should be taken seriously to confirm that all the basic issues discussed in 2013 and 2014 had been included and given due consideration.

Dr Yusuf Sayed, Reader in International Education at the University of Sussex, representing UNICEF, drew attention to the consultation process that had taken place, and which had resulted in number of significant reports. In mid-September 2013 the UN Report *One Million Voices* had been launched. It consolidated all the thematic consultations, including education. The report clearly stated that its first priority was education for the post-2015 agenda. It called for a single harmonised global education framework, guided by a rights-based approach, which was of universal relevance and informed by lessons from the MDGs and EFA. The results of the UNESCO- and UNICEF-led thematic consultations on education had also been launched in the form of a synthesis report, for which a summary was available.

There had been interrelationships in some of the post-2015 processes. UNICEF and UNESCO had fed into the debates and deliberations of the consultations of the HLP. UNICEF and UNESCO had also fed in the deliberations of the regional meetings into their thematic consultations. In addition, all the various proposals on education, particularly the Commonwealth Ministers' Recommendations, had been noted and reflected in the synthesis report and in the summary.

One of the lessons that UNICEF and UNESCO had learnt was that there had to be a more participatory approach to the thematic consultations on education than has been the case when the MDGs and EFA goals had been developed. The need to ensure participation explained why the process had, to some, appeared to be unco-ordinated. Previously, when the Millennium Declaration was drafted and MDGs finally agreed, there had been fewer voices. Now there were more voices, particularly those of national governments. The UN Development Group (UNDG) was clear that the process was not perfect. The Global Education Meeting in Senegal in March 2013 had been important in terms of the education discussions, and represented a deliberate attempt not to draft the post-MDGs by small committees. The resulting vitality and the interrelationship between the different processes made the process less clear than it could have been, but it has also attested to the vibrancy of the debate and discussion around the future world that was wanted.

Professor Keith Lewin, Director, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, noted that it was vital to maintain aspiration and extend it. He said that one of the virtues of the Commonwealth's Recommendations was that they were high on aspiration. The aspiration was much higher in the Commonwealth Recommendations Background Paper than what was in the HLP's report. The Commonwealth paper advocated nine years of education and retained a commitment to service delivery free of charge; this was absent from the high level goals of the HLP report. The magnitude of impact the Commonwealth could have would depend partly on the strength of the narrative. The plausibility, the power and the ambition that had been projected was good. It could be compared with other structures which had had to pull back from their position in 2000.

He warned that retaining and extending the diagnosis which stated that access was still a

problem. Access had to be defined in a broader way, of an extended vision and about learning. He stated that the mistake in 2000 had been to create a narrative that allowed these issues to be separated. The Commonwealth had a platform to ensure that this could be rectified.

He also noted that finance was central to the discourse and the commitments. There were questions that surrounded aid. Two of the largest bi-lateral donors were Commonwealth countries. It was a fact that the result of the framework development process would have seismic consequences for the architecture of aid if it changed dramatically. These were the areas that the Commonwealth needed to use to interface with other organisations.

Ms Katherine Ellis, Director, Youth Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, informed the Meeting that other Commonwealth divisions were also looking at the post-2015 agenda and advocating goals related to their remit. At the Youth Affairs Ministers meeting in April 2013, Ministers agreed to put the Youth's recommendations to the HLP that there should be a specific goal on youth and that every goal should have indicators related to young people. This had also been fed into the SDG/Rio+20 process. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka in November 2013 there would be an opportunity to ensure that the Heads of the Commonwealth were very much aligned in their thinking about what the Ministers were proposing for the post-2015 agenda.

5. Identification of opportunities and gaps in the post-2015 development agenda

Mr Alex Wright, Consultant, representing Open Society Foundations, presented the gaps and opportunities in the global development agenda-setting processes.

Gaps

Mr Wright noted that there appeared to be gaps and a disconnect in the process of developing the post-MDGs and post-EFA on the one hand and the SDGs on the other. Ms Amina J Mohammed, the Special Advisor of the UN Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning, had spoken publically about the door closing on the process in February but the windows would remain open. Mr Wright interpreted this to mean that the external consultations on the working group process would close in February and there would be a shift in the process to internal committees. He warned of the danger that the Open Working Group could set the terrain before the democratic process of the EFA consultations had been completed. The Global Conference on Education (EFA) would take place in May 2015, a full year after 'the door had closed'.

A related gap, which had been referred to as a 'northern tsunami and a southern ripple', was that southern voices had been absent in the discussions on post-2015, which had generally taken place in northern capitals with international NGOs; thus the southern view had not been fully reflected. There was also the absence of any meaningful engagement with the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). He suggested that the meeting consider ways of engaging these countries, two of which were in the Commonwealth, into the wider process of the post-2015 agenda. In addition, it needed to be noted that China already was spending large amounts of money without any reference to the UN framework and could be an important player and contact.

There were gaps in the aid architecture and structure. There was some uncertainty about the future of the Global Monitoring Report (GMR), given the lack of substantive discussions around EFA to date. There were also questions around the measurement of education, and how the Learning Metric Task Force would fit into the new proposed framework and its relation to the GMR? Another gap was the aid process gap. Developed countries were engaging in the agenda development process through their international aid departments and not their MoEs, even though the professional experience and engagement of MoEs was required, especially if the new goals were, as expected, to be universal.

There was a gap between the education constituency and the many other constituencies involved in the wider post-2015 process. The education sector needed to speak with one voice - clear, coherent and as a whole, to the broader process. In this way the bureaucrats and diplomats who had a large hand in drawing up the final goals would really understand education and its importance and relevance to the wider goals. A suitable test would be how many of the foreign ministers attending the UN meeting the following week would be made aware of the outcomes of the Technical Meeting. Members needed to consider how to ensure visibility of education in general and the Recommendations in particular in national and international discourse.

The final gap could also be considered to be an opportunity. The landscape today was very different from that in 2000 but there still was no clarity as to how a global political settlement could be reached to enable a new framework. For the Commonwealth, there was an opportunity to advance its position through the Open Working Group process, in which 19 Commonwealth countries were engaged and of which Kenya was the chair. The next two presidencies of the UNGA would also be Commonwealth countries. The Commonwealth could also use its members to intersect with other regional associations.

Opportunities

Opportunity for advocacy in 2013 should, in the first instance, focus on ‘the door’ before it shut in February 2014. There were a number of meetings planned to take place the week after the Technical Meeting: UNGA in New York; the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Meeting the same week; the EFA Steering Group and Task Force meetings in November 2013; the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in November 2013; four more planned meetings of the Open Working Group which related in different degrees to the education agenda; CHOGM in Sri Lanka, and the associated Commonwealth People’s Forum which would provide another avenue for civil society engagement. Mr Wright also drew attention to another constituency, the International Summit of the Teaching Profession in March 2014 involving Education International and OECD’s education section. He hoped that the door would remain open a month or so to accommodate the outcomes of these processes.

Opportunities in 2014-2015 included the annual UNGA meetings; the Global Education Conference in Seoul in May 2015; the CHOGM in Mauritius in 2015; 19 CCEM in The Bahamas; other Commonwealth meetings; and other regional meetings and technical processes that ministries and stakeholders could be engaged in.

The Technical Meeting was invited to consider keeping the map of opportunities updated going forward and that this be made a collective endeavour.

Responses and discussion

The Chair summarised the key areas raised in the Issues Paper:

- i. *Integrated development framework (MDGs, EFA and the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development)*: whether the three frameworks would be unified (Commonwealth’s position) or remain separate.
- ii. *Universality*: the type of contribution from developed countries. It was appropriate to engage MoEs in addition to aid agencies.
- iii. *Skills* (skills for life and skills for employment): Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) was becoming a priority in most developing countries, raising issues around emerging skills, emerging sectors and the matching of skills to employment.
- iv. *Measurement of quality indicators*: Would global assessment frameworks be appropriate for developing countries? Some leading work had been done by UNESCO.

Mr McLean raised two points which were in the Issues Paper - quality and measurement. He noted that, in relation to quality, one had to look at the quality of learning. Access without quality was a non-starter. With regard to measurement, there has been a temptation to focus on learning outcomes because it had been assumed that these were good indicators of quality. Teachers had assessment built into their teaching. Other indicators to assess outcomes, such as indicators linked to the education process, teacher qualification, proxy indicators, and the type of resources available and necessary, with a focus on rural areas and on children with special needs, needed to be examined.

Professor Hegarty underlined the need to develop more robust measures than those that already existed. In response to Mr McLean, he asked whether processes to be measured should be at the end of the term or the end of the year. Children needed to be stimulated, to be excited by learning, to enjoy school and not just to master the curriculum. The challenge was to get the right kind of indicators, including process indicators, in a more local way for local impact. These local indicators could not be conceptualised as national indicators. The difficulty was to come up with local indicators that could capture the process that has been considered to be important without having to erect them into a national framework. He also said that he would add the word 'good' to Mr McLean's statement - *good* teachers have assessment built into teaching and modify their lessons accordingly.

Mr Sinyolo recalled the mistakes made in the drafting stage of the 2000 MDGs and said these mistakes had to be learned from if the Recommendations were to be considered and used maximally. The main consideration of the drafting committee for the MDGs had been cost. There had been concern about the amount developing countries would ask the developed countries for in order to implement the agreed international goals. As a result the goals were narrow. A similar situation was faced with a recommendation asked for by African nations, which was that TVET was considered to be key. In the closed room where the drafting took place, questions were raised such as: if the goal were included, who could fund it? Would developed countries be able to provide enough resources to implement the framework? It would be an expensive goal and no one could fund it. In the adopted framework, TVET was left out. Commonwealth countries needed to be part of the post-MDGs drafting group in order to influence the agenda.

With regard to the use of statistics, Mr Sinyolo noted that developed, high achieving countries such as Finland did not focus on one particular aspect of education, such as primary education, but on all levels of education and training - from early childhood education to university. This was the reason for their success. There were already many organisations positioning themselves to monitor the new framework. These included testing agencies, which were keen to promote a focus on measurement as this would benefit them; the OECD, which had said it had considerable experience in international student assessment and that measurement was necessary; the GMR, which was in a position to provide legitimacy to the framework; and the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF). There was thus competition for the role of monitoring the implementation of the goals. Mr Sinyolo noted that measurement constituted a business and that this aspect needed to be explored and its implications understood: partners from the South in the drafting group would have pressure from vested interests. The Commonwealth had an important part to play in voicing its concerns to, for example, the OECD and the European Union. The Commonwealth could work with those members involved in the drafting team to ensure that there was a single position, a Commonwealth supportive position, put forward. Mr Sinyolo noted that the structure of the Commonwealth's recommended post-2015 framework should be similar to that of those drafting the new MDGs. If the structure were different, the content of the Commonwealth's Recommendations would be lost. In the case of education, there had to be 'super goals' and 'subsidiary' goals. There was a need for a 'Plan B' in case the structure were different.

Dr Rosemary Preston, Executive Chairperson, Council for Education in the Commonwealth, congratulated the Commonwealth Secretariat on the development of the Recommendations. She was particularly pleased that the Commonwealth has proposed extending the goal for basic education provision to nine years, for bringing in TVET, and for including adult education and

lifelong education in the proposals. These had suffered during the MDG/EFA period. Dr Preston expressed concern about what would happen behind closed doors at the drafting stage, noting that the positions espoused by some key persons in the development process had altered considerably over time, as the complexity of negotiating a framework comprising numerous constructs became evident. It seemed that the UN considered some constructs to be unassailable, and it was questionable whether education remained a priority or to what degree funding to achieve an acceptable quality had been considered. It also appeared that non-state provision was being privileged over state provision, with the debate centring on quality, to the detriment of tackling inequality. There was a danger that, unless this privileging of a certain aspect of the discourse was countered, discussants would become inured to it.

Bangladesh explained that it had focused on access and had done well in increasing access to primary and secondary education as well as in gender parity. But access had led to a drop in quality and an increase in drop-outs from the system. The representative gave the example of his own daughter, who had started school but who after three months had become disinterested because no learning was taking place. The opportunity cost of education was high. Richer parents could take their children to private schools but those economically challenged could not. This has increased disparity and inequity in Bangladesh. The representative warned that the same could happen with TVET in a unified agenda. There was the expectation that increasing access to TVET could result in more jobs being created but this was not correct. TVET was very expensive for developing countries to universalise and would result in a drop in quality as there would not be materials for learning available.

Kenya stated that it was in agreement that all the three current education components should be aligned and unified, each reinforcing the other so that the impact in fulfilling the goals could be realised. The nine year basic cycle was in line with Kenya's own plans for education. TVET was important for skills training as a means of imparting vocational skills to many young out-of-school Kenyans who were unemployed. It should be strengthened as a goal for the post-2015 agenda. As part of the Ministerial Working Group Meeting, Kenya agreed with the sentiments expressed in the Issues Paper and agreed to use its position as co-chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development to advocate the Commonwealth position.

Jamaica observed that TVET was an issue on which to focus. The dialogue needed to be aligned to the demand for skills in the labour market. New and emerging skills were required and these were lacking in developing countries, causing problems in developing the economy. TVET needed to be linked to life-long education and training to ensure an increase in productivity. The representative was also of the view that nine years of basic education was insufficient and that another three years should be added, making it 12 years of basic education, from early childhood to secondary school. A holistic model would present a seamless alignment for efficiency and productivity.

On the issue of costs it was stated that there was what was best and what was required. If one only looked at costs then education would be sub-standard. National governments needed to focus on what was good for sustainability.

Uganda expressed a different perspective on costs. There was a need to be more focused and to undertake what was possible within the costs and resources available. The Recommendations needed to be more realistic - the goals identified would lead to costs being too high to sustain; a more realistic and strategic proposal would be reducing the number of goals, as too many goals would result in a lack of depth and therefore a drop in quality.

Sierra Leone recognised the need to look at the four areas highlighted in the Issues Paper and integrate them in the MDGs, EFA and Sustainable Development frameworks. Unifying them would reduce confusion and mean that scarce resources would be spent better. Sierra Leone had increased access but there was pressure to increase quality and the unavailability of adequate resources was causing a problem. It was felt that it was the developed world that was putting

pressure on the developing world to achieve the MDGs and Sierra Leone was now looking for more south-south co-operation in attaining its goals. The new global development framework should allow for differences among national governments to be reflected in the timescales allotted to achieve the goals.

Sierra Leone noted that the curriculum relating to skills could be linked with assessment issues. The capacity of the labour market to absorb skilled workers was crucial, and more highly skilled workers were better paid. This factor has helped to contribute to a positive attitude towards skilled workers.

With regard to the measurement of quality, it was noted that assessment tools had been used in many countries. Sierra Leone was starting the process of establishing a national assessment and learning framework and it would be unfair for those countries which had been undertaking assessments for many years to be in the same category as those who were just starting.

Sierra Leone had been very successful in increasing access to education but this was now causing problems in quality as resources were very limited. The quality of graduates at all levels had been poor and SL was going to concentrate on quality issues. This was reflected in the recently drafted Sector Plan.

Ms Ellis reiterated the importance of providing good quality education. She also wanted to see more collaboration and synchronisation of curriculum and pedagogy in making use of knowledge and learning through the internet. The youth, who were the beneficiaries of this technology, should be given a greater voice in aligning this technology with education and TVET; with regard to TVET, the private sector should also be given a greater say as it was driving this technology and also constituted the employers of youth.

Mauritius agreed that schools should be equipped with information and communication technology (ICT). In Mauritius, youths were already engaged in out-of-school activities related to ICT. The role of teachers was changing, as well as the concepts of leadership, pedagogy and resources. Parents, stakeholders and the private sector were very important and should be included in the dialogue.

Barbados observed that within the Commonwealth, different countries were at different levels of development and this should be accommodated within the framework proposed. The question for the developing countries was how to ensure adequate provision of resources to achieve minimum standards. There was agreement that there had to be a focus on access and the process of learning, and that measurement had to take into consideration the effectiveness of the curriculum, teachers' effectiveness, school leadership etc. Inputs, processes and outputs were important. If the inputs and the processes were flawed, the outputs would be flawed. Barbados encouraged the sharing of best practice among Commonwealth countries.

Nigeria pointed out that the problem with the current MDGs was not the lack of commitment but the lack of finance. Although countries came up with good plans and finance was available from both aid agencies and the African Union, it was still insufficient to accomplish the goals. Nigeria undertook the two education goals in the MDGs because they were recognised as internationally accepted and legitimate and therefore it was important to have education goals in the post-MDGs. In relation to TVET, it had to focus on the quality of learning and the cost of implementation. Nigeria also agreed that education should be holistic - the basic cycle should be from early childhood education to secondary education. There was a need to understand exactly what the LMTF was measuring and for what purpose, and how relevant this would be for developing countries. New technologies including ICT needed to be included in the curriculum to give children a chance to progress in the world of work.

Seychelles agreed that there needed to be a unified framework in the post-2015 agenda that all Commonwealth countries could subscribe to. It was pleased that access and TVET were included

in the Recommendations, which needed better recognition. Seychelles Medium-Term Strategy Plan for Education had just been completed with the help of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning and EU. As with other small island states, expertise was limited in Seychelles and it appealed for good practice to be shared, which could be adapted to the social, education and economic framework of the country.

Dr Singh referred to his 2012 report on *Quality and National Level Action for Normative Quality*, which had been presented to the UNGA; it was on quality education and the promotion of normative action. It noted that quality needed to be looked at in a holistic framework, not just the instrumental role of education but also its humanistic mission - the values education should promote; for example, democracy and human rights, among others.

Together with this report, Dr Singh had also presented a report on TVET to the UNGA, available on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. TVET was considered an education right because it was linked to the right to work. It was a very special right because it necessarily involved a partnership with the private sector. Although it had been a weak link, private-public partnership was an important element of this right. He stressed the importance of institutionalised collaboration between industry and TVET, because this would ensure that the curriculum was relevant. In many developed countries, skills development was treated seriously and linked to laws. He gave Australia as an example where everyone who learned a skill had to undergo training in line with the country's legal framework.

Quality imperatives should be linked inextricably with TVET to give it a higher status as it had often been seen as a 'second chance' institution. He suggested that it would be good for TVET to be linked to literacy and to lifelong education. He agreed with the Commonwealth's position of a nine year cycle of basic education and that TVET's position should be part of secondary education and skills development.

On the issue of quality, there was a need to emphasise it at the national level. The question was how best to promote it. He suggested that quality should be seen in a holistic framework to ensure minimum standards in education were maintained, otherwise quality would be compromised, prolonging the on-going learning crisis.

Professor Lewin noted that there were two institutions that had contributed greatly to the debate on the post-2015 scenario and had been mentioned in the discussions about monitoring progress in implementing the goals. The first, the GMR, had been established very specifically to be independent of any particular agency or interest, and although housed at UNESCO, had been financed independently. It was very important that it should be allowed to continue and to retain its independence in some form. This should be actively campaigned for. The data used on gender, privatisation and on many other aspects including inequality had come from the GMR and from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), but was being mediated by a group of people who did not have to answer to a single master. This was critical. At the CCEMs, the Commonwealth has used data from member states and also from the GMR. He hoped that at the end of this two-day meeting there would be some communication about the GMR or its successor as an independent arbitrator of these highly contested issues. The second institution, the LMTF, had already had some influence. It was about more than just measurement; it was about curriculum, quality and assessment. As soon as propositions about learning goals were advanced, by default, propositions about national curricula and its manifestation, and about the learning process, were also advanced. The LMTF would be central to measuring progression on learning goals. As part of future funding tranche releases, the measurements used by the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF) would be required of any country which asked for external assistance. It was therefore important that the LMTF be owned publically and was accountable.

Dr Preston expressed concern in respect of the quality, structure and assessment of TVET and its implications for employability/employment. It had long been recognised that the costs of ensuring good quality TVET were very high; significantly higher than those of mainstream

education at different levels. In low income states, this led to poor provision (staff training and facilities), which went hand in hand with inadequate systems of learning recognition and accreditation in member states. This in turn meant unreliable measurement of TVET outcomes and the labour market destinations to which they led - planned and otherwise. While some might find themselves using the trade skills that they had acquired, market permitting, there were likely to be barriers to progression in terms of pay and status. There was a lack of reliable data for those who did not use the specific technical skills in which they were trained, although in some cases it had been found that a significant proportion of those leaving centres do become community leaders and otherwise active citizens.

Mr Rakumar Bidla, Programme Officer, Youth Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, stressed that it was important that education should be discussed in terms of a rights perspective but that monitoring and enforcement would be difficult to put in place. Education was a human right but there were countries which had supported and institutionalised social inequity such as the lack of enforcement of the rights of women. He questioned how education, or education indicators, could be monitored if it challenged the structure and laws of a country.

6. Issues Paper

Mr McLean presented a summary of the Issues Paper and the key issues arising from it. The global development agenda involved multiple processes and discussions from which four emerging issues requiring attention could be discerned:

1. *Integrated Development Framework*: integrating the three current education components - MDGs, EFA and DESD;
2. *Universality*: it was not clear to what extent MoEs in developed countries were engaged in the development of the agenda;
3. *Skills*: further thought to be given to effectively integrating skills for employment
4. *Measurement of quality*: the influence of global learning assessment metrics on the frameworks needed to be clarified and understood.

Integration

The Integrated Development Framework (Sustainable Development Goals) consisted of the following goals:

- End poverty in all its forms;
- Ensure social inclusion;
- Address the environmental agenda;
- Good governance to support the first three goals.

The education goals were found in the 2000-2015 multiple frameworks: two MDGs and six EFA goals, and DESD. The Commonwealth recommendation was that these frameworks should be aligned so that they effectively constitute a single framework for education, structured with two levels of goals. The first level would capture a major dimension, as in the current MDGs, while the second level goals would be more technical, like the EFA goals. Mr McLean noted that there had been some calls for a single SDG framework post-2015 but there had been no consensus. There was agreement on the need for a decision about a unified framework being required before the design process began. The HLP identified four goals that lacked either the mobilising simplicity of the MDGs or the technical integrity of EFA. The HLP and UN Secretary-General's reports had been silent on the future of EFA. Urgent advocacy was required to ensure a workable structural solution to the post-2015 architecture for education.

Universality

The UN Secretary-General's report affirmed that the goals applying to all countries was 'a key element of the emerging vision for post 2015'. The HLP report called for a 'new global partnership'. However, to date, engagement had not been universal or equal. Universality was functionally important to realise goals and 'leave no one behind'. Equitable access to quality education was not just a matter for low and middle income countries. The framework proposed by the Commonwealth Recommendations promoted national ownership, but universality required a coherent development agenda for all countries, cognisant of regional, national and local circumstances and priorities. This suggested relative rather than absolute goals (as in the Commonwealth Recommendations), or differentiated deadlines for the attainment of goals based on conditions and capacity. Advocacy was required to ensure equal and universal engagement on the post-2015 education framework.

TVET/Skills

Education, TVET, was fundamental, but the MDGs did not place sufficient emphasis on 'youth'. Young people did not only require skills for employment but also skills for life as responsible citizens. TVET needed to provide enhanced opportunities for disadvantaged youth and adults. Qualified teachers and adequate public funding were essential for effective TVET. Skills development required a comprehensive and integrated approach, and needed to be placed in the context of life-long learning.

The report of the HLP partially addressed TVET in its 4th education target, but it limited/reduced it to increasing the number of young people and adults with the skills needed for work (ignoring the broader spectrum of knowledge, skills and attitudes), and it ignored the area of upper secondary and higher education.

Measuring education quality

Measuring education quality was a question of balance: neither too much information nor too little was required; neither too universal nor too specific. Any measures adopted would have intended and unintended consequences. The MDGs' emphasis on access to the detriment of quality had led to new focus on learning outcomes. The dangers of a narrow focus on learning included that it narrowed the conception of quality to reading, writing and counting; focusing only on outcomes neglected the process of teaching and learning and the essential inputs required for quality; and it de-linked the discussion of quality from the discussion on equity.

The use of selected learning outcomes as a proxy for quality privileged the 'instrumental' benefits of education and marginalised the intrinsic and positional benefits. Managing educational quality only by learning outcomes risked neglecting pedagogy and education processes. Monitoring against external standards often led to technical and bureaucratic solutions rather than enabling teachers and schools to improve. There was also a question about who monitored: would there be a Global Monitoring Report if there were no EFA? Would the LMTF take over?

Mr McLean suggested some key questions to discuss in relation to these four issues:

1. Integrated framework

- What actions are required to ensure a coherent integrated development framework for education?
 - By whom are these actions to be taken? What is the schedule of actions?
- Where should education be located in the SDGs?
 - Should education run through all pillars - economic, environmental and social? Or

- Should education be demarcated under one pillar?
- What role should the Commonwealth/stakeholders play?

2. *Universality*

- How can *all* countries be engaged in achieving the post 2015 goals?
 - What can be done to promote buy-in and ownership of the post-2015 goals by all MoEs (including in OECD countries, emerging economies and small states)?
- What preparations for post 2015 need to be made by countries that did not prioritise MDGs/EFA/DESD?
- What role should the Commonwealth/stakeholders play?

3. *Skills/TVET*

- What does a focus on ‘skills for employability’ mean for education systems and resources - will they need to be completely reconfigured?
- How can education systems, including TVET pathways at secondary level and beyond, guarantee a balance between providing specific skills for employment and foundation/transferable/generic skills?
- What can Commonwealth governments and stakeholders do to ensure that TVET is included in the post-2015 agenda and that a TVET goal/target is fully implemented/achieved?

4. *Measurement of quality*

- How do we ensure that there will be an independent, competent body to measure quality?
- How do we measure inputs, processes and outputs within a broader quality framework?
- How can we ensure that equity is built in to the bedrock of the quality discussion?
- What role should the Commonwealth/stakeholders play?

Responses and discussion

Professor Hegarty provided some background to the LMTF, its aims and recommendations. The global learning crisis associated with access, quality and inequity was hitting the poorest, the most marginalised and youth hard. To deliver on the promise to transform lives and confer social, economic and environmental benefits to society, children and youth needed to develop the knowledge and skills required to be productive citizens and attain sustainable livelihoods. A global learning metrics framework would provide support for the fulfilment of the MDGs, the EFA and the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI). Through a consultative and multi-stakeholder process, seven domains of skills and competencies had been identified for children and youth to develop. The LMTF proposed:

- i. **A shift** from universal access to access plus learning. Better data collection was needed.
- ii. **Learning competencies:** Opportunities for children in education from early childhood to lower secondary to master competencies in 7 domains:
 - Physical wellbeing;
 - Social and emotional;
 - Culture and the arts;
 - Literacy and communication;
 - Learning approaches and cognition;

- Numeracy and mathematics;
 - Science and technology.
- iii. **Global tracking** through a set of learning indicators to measure fundamental learning opportunities over a child's education career.
- **Learning for all:** Combine measures of completion and learning (reading proficiency at the end of primary school) into one indicator;
 - **Age and education matter for learning:** Measure timely entry, progression and completion of schooling, and population-based indicators to capture those who do not enter or leave school early;
 - **Reading:** Measure foundational skills by Grade 3 and proficiency by the end of primary school;
 - **Numeracy:** Measure basic skills by end of primary and proficiency by lower secondary school;
 - **Ready to learn:** Measure acceptable levels of early learning and development across a subset of domains by the time a child enters primary school;
 - **Citizen of the world:** Measure among youth the demonstration of values and skills necessary for success in their communities, countries and the world;
 - **Breadth of learning opportunities:** Track exposure to learning opportunities across all seven domains of learning.
- iv. **Support** would be provided to countries in strengthening their assessment systems and ultimately, in improving learning levels. An international, multi-stakeholder partnership would be set up to ensure collaboration, fill essential gaps in support to countries and sustain a broad coalition.
- v. **Equity:** Measurement must focus on rising inequity within countries with data on child characteristics to ensure equitable learning outcomes (school conditions, teacher quality, etc.). This would include the characteristics of out-of-school children and youth, the barriers they faced, and the identification of effective strategies to reach children who were furthest behind.
- vi. **Assessment as a public good:** No country should be precluded from measuring learning outcomes due to financial constraints.
- vii. **Action** must be taken to ensure the right to learn for all children and youth, and to advocate for accessible, transparent systems for measuring learning.

With the post-2015 agenda on the horizon efforts to expand enrolments, retention and completion at all levels had to be accompanied by policies to enhance educational quality.

Barbados emphasised the need to work with ministers of education of member states at the forthcoming Executive Board of UNESCO to increase awareness of the Commonwealth's post-2015 agenda at the global level.

Ms Beth Kreling, Executive Secretary, Commonwealth Consortium for Education, said the keys were to find realistic goals and have ownership of the goals. The next stage was to have a matrix that was relevant and owned by national governments. If this was achievable, it would be implemented and outcomes could be measured.

Bangladesh pointed out that reporting data in developing countries was always a problem as the collection of reliable data at the local level was difficult. Maintaining the quality of data would require support in terms of capacity, resources and ownership by national governments. He

asked that each national government be given space to have realistic targets - for example, reducing gender inequality by half was not possible for some countries within a particular time frame.

Mr Sinyolo enquired into the possible uses of the learning metrics framework, querying whether it could have a bearing on countries' data systems and socio-economic plans. Lessons could be learnt from the previous implementation of the MDGs and EFA goals and the effects they had on various countries' education systems. The structure of the LMTF should embed the GMR, EFA and DESD frameworks into its matrix; if it did not then its impact would be limited... He asked whether more, and more complicated, structures were being created when the heart of learning was not outcomes but the processes within the education sector.

Professor Hegarty responded that the purpose of the LMTF was to increase quality through learning. It dealt with processes such as curriculum, teacher training, qualifications and experience. He gave the example that social and emotional learning would change from primary to secondary school as the child grew and matured, and from country to country. It was to help children to be happy and content at school. The reduction of inequity would include the characteristics of out-of-school children, the barriers they faced and to reach those who were furthest behind. All children, whether from rural or urban areas, from urban slums or from nomadic populations should have similar learning experiences in school.

Seychelles observed that among Commonwealth countries there was no homogeneity - there were developed countries; emerging countries; middle income, lower income and economically poor countries; small states and large states etc. The differences in each country were being reflected in the discussion by member states represented at the Technical Meeting. This raised a question about whose advocacy, and whose agenda, was being recommended. She asked how a unified position representing members who were coming from very different starting points could be found.

Jamaica stated that collective wisdom among Commonwealth countries had in the past reached a unified position.

Barbados queried the location of the LMTF and raised concern about its alignment to North America because its convenors, the Brookings Institution and UIS, were based in the USA and Canada respectively.

Mr McLean noted that the GMR had a team of about eight people and a budget of US\$ 5 million. He was concerned about the capacity available in various countries. A number of countries had already spent a great deal of money to set up education management information systems in their respective country. He asked whether any new body would add a layer of bureaucracy on top of what already existed.

Prof Hegarty replied that it was unlikely that the LMTF would be based within the UIS; it was more likely to be attached to the GMR group.

7. Development of advocacy strategy

The Chair requested the Technical Meeting to contribute to the development of an advocacy strategy for the Commonwealth Recommendations that could be adopted.

Ms Eghobamien clarified the objective and the purpose of the Technical Meeting. She said it was to agree a coherent and consistent message to inform actions at different levels. The purpose was to keep up the momentum on the Recommendations and to engage with the post-2015 development agenda processes in a systematic way so that Commonwealth messages and priorities would not be drowned out, while at the same time taking into account the emerging

issues.

Ms Eghobamien concluded by noting that the overall objective would be to maintain a coherent and systematic engagement with the post-2015 global goals processes to advance the interest and concerns of the Commonwealth in relation to education.

Participants asked for further clarity as agreement on the four key areas in the Issues Paper had not yet been achieved and questioned whether the issues should be clarified before moving to action.

Ms Eghobamien explained the Ministerial Working Group had already taken a position about issues such as the integrated framework; and this was reflected in the adopted Recommendations. The Technical Meeting needed to equip stakeholders with additional information which they might need to support, defend and promote the position of the Commonwealth Education Ministers. The meeting was not seeking to redefine the issues but to enrich it in order to facilitate the Commonwealth's engagement process.

Professor Lewin said that the Commonwealth already had something to advocate for in education. The Background Paper was well written and the Recommendations were excellent. He agreed with Professor Hegarty that the Issues Paper should be used as a basis for further discussion with members of the HLP and other influential bodies. Any information that the Commonwealth had about the UN's post-2015 agenda could be incorporated into further iterations of the Issues Paper to make it more appealing to the respective drafting teams. In relation to the four issues, he noted that the Recommendations proposed a single coherent framework for education. The Commonwealth should ask how this could be promoted more effectively and how could it get more people in the Commonwealth to listen to it. It addresses some of the deficiencies that the HLP did not and the Commonwealth should extol its virtues. Universality required a balance between local relevance and global fitness for purpose. The more universal the issue was the less likely it would be relevant to context. It also lied in an inverse relationship to the position taken by a number of donors. With skills and TVET, there was a need to articulate a clearer position; from the Issues Paper there appeared to be no agreement on the skills agenda. Measurement and monitoring was required if the post-MDGs, post-EFA and SDGs were to be implemented. To fulfil these goals, the GMR and the LMTF should be included as independent and broad based groups. More important and not discussed was the Global Partnership for Education, which would be the largest single entity distributing concessional finances in most countries.

Uganda asked what was expected of the Commonwealth Ministers of Education, requesting clarification on who was going to do what and how an advocacy strategy related to the Open Working Group on SGDs and other groups such as the regional and global intergovernmental and multilateral bodies.

Barbados stressed the importance of all Commonwealth countries having ownership of the Recommendations and the mandate was to drive the agenda forward. The participants were urged to use contacts and colleagues within their countries to reach those who would be attending the UNGA, UNESCO meetings and meetings/conferences at the regional level.

Seychelles agreed with Barbados and requested that permanent secretaries in MoEs should be well briefed on the Recommendations, as should permanent secretaries of the ministries of foreign affairs. There was agreement from **Bangladesh**, **Nigeria** and **Jamaica** on these strategies.

Mr Sinyolo reminded participants that a deliberate strategy was needed at CHOGM - for the main meeting and for side groups.

Mr Vijay Krishnarayan, Director, Commonwealth Foundation, said that as an advocate of civil

society, he applauded the Recommendations and it was testimony to a progressive way of doing business. He encouraged the meeting to think about alliances and stakeholders outside government and to see stakeholders and civil society as key to advocacy. He had encouraged civil society to engage in the post-2015 agenda debate. The Commonwealth Foundation would be convening civil society at the Commonwealth's People's Forum where the Recommendations and strategy would be discussed and the Recommendations distributed.

A draft template for an advocacy strategy was presented to participants for discussion. Participants were invited to use this to frame discussions on the strategy and road map for ensuring a successful advocacy.

Figure 1. Advocacy strategy template

MWG Advocacy Strategy and Road Map					
Purpose					
Over-all Objective					
Specific objectives		Engagement of countries			
		Reporting mechanisms			
		Networking			
		Tracking progress			
Modalities	Action	Roles & Responsibilities	Challenges	Opportunities	Follow-up
Country level					
Regional level					
Global level					

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8. Summary of day one

The Chair opened the second day of the meeting by welcoming two new participants representing UNESCO and the Global Campaign for Education. On behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat he welcomed all to the meeting.

The Chair then reaffirmed the principal objectives of the meeting, which were to come to a consensus on the four issues raised and agree an advocacy strategy and road map. He also summarised the previous day's work.

Ms Eghobamien added her welcome to the new participants and to those who had been present the previous day. She reiterated the importance of the exercise at hand. The previous day, the group had discussed the Recommendations of the Ministerial Working Group and in the light of the discussions there were salient issues that came up for more in-depth discourse. The essence of meeting was to look at the four issues and to come up with messages or positions that would fit/re-echo the Recommendations made by the Ministers. The other objective was to get consensus views on a strategy to advocate the Ministers' Recommendations so that those drafting the post-2015 framework would be able to use them.

She noted that the previous day, attention had been drawn to the fact that although the Ministerial Recommendations proposed three principal goals, there needed to be options in case only one high level goal was possible. The question to pose would be, how to harmonise the 3

goals without losing the richness of the recommendations? This would require the challenges and risks being taken in to account when developing the strategy. In concluding, she encouraged the use of the online platform 'Commonwealth Connects' to enable further discussions and actions.

9. Review of the issues

Mr McLean gave a short presentation revisiting the Issues Paper in the light of the previous day's discussions, and locating the programme of action for the Commonwealth in advocating for the Recommendations within the opportunities afforded by discussions taking place in the international community.

1. *Integrated development framework*

It was clear there needed to be a coherent, integrated framework, not a piece-meal framework. There should be a consensus as to how it fitted with the SDGs. The core SDGs had commitments to eradicating poverty and inequity, and a focus on the environment and governance as their key goals. All these goals were important for education. The position the Commonwealth had taken was solid and had a number of advantages over the narrower position advanced by the HLP. It would also be closer to what was expected to emerge from the Open Working Group on SDGs. The Commonwealth had aspired to have three goals in the post-2015 MDG-level framework, and underneath a set of sub-goals akin to those of the EFA framework. However, there was the very real possibility that there would be a single goal for education in the global development agenda, and this possibility needed to be addressed. There were many risks to the Commonwealth's position, including diplomatic and political interests involved in the process and the need to balance the interests of all the other sectors. Mr McLean therefore suggested that participants draft a single, over-arching goal; it was clear that the meeting was in favour of having EFA-style goals beneath that, where the education sector could develop a fuller agenda for itself.

2. *Universality of goals*

A very strong Commonwealth position was that the set of goals should apply to all countries in the world. The developed countries should not be the ones to set the agenda and determine the priorities. Within these global goals there needed to be a set of goals that were aspirational and held by all nations equally, but there also needed to be space for national goals to fit in. The principle of universal goals was that all countries would support them. Mr McLean asked how this could be advanced, bearing in mind all the Commonwealth and UN meetings that took place. One of the tasks was to identify how and where this discussion could be effected, and where it could connect with discussions taking place internally in the countries.

3. *Skills and TVET*

TVET affirmed on the one hand the relevance of education for skills training but also affirmed the position of adult education both in terms of skills related to work and in terms of literacy. Literacy was required not only for children at school but also for life skills. Even if there were a system set up for TVET, it could not be sure that it would provide the kinds of skills young people needed to get a job in the area. It was more likely that young people would need a broader set of skills even if they were not employed. It was crucial for there to be pathways in general education for various levels of TVET. This called for closer collaboration to be set up between industry, society and government.

4. *Measurement of quality*

There was general agreement that quality of education systems was crucial and the meeting saw it very much in an integrated sense. The access issues in education had not been solved and

were linked fundamentally to the quality issues. It would be difficult to talk about quality issues in education without talking about equity. Measurement of quality was crucial in relation to the development goals; it was therefore necessary that there needed to be an independent and credible process, with structure for measurement. The GMR was considered to be important for the good contribution it had made.

Professor Hegarty explained that the LMTF would not wish to compete in any way with the existing framework and it was going to make a broad contribution to the education debate. In relation to quality there was a need to look at the processes and not only at outcomes. There was a strong sense that a broader framework was necessary, which had to be understood at a systems level. If there were no quality in the process there would be no quality in the outcomes. In measuring quality, the meeting wanted to make sure that there was no dislocation from the equity issue. The question was how to advance the positions that the Commonwealth Ministers had come up, especially as it had a number of countries backing it.

10. Roundtable on emerging issues and Commonwealth post-2015 education concerns

Mr Olav Seim, Director, EFA Global Partnership Team, UNESCO, thanked the Commonwealth Secretariat for inviting him to the meeting. Since his participation in December 2012, UNESCO had done a consultation with UNICEF on education. The synthesis report had been released the previous week. He noted that in the Issues Paper, education had been prioritised and he congratulated the Commonwealth on identifying the issues and challenges outlined in the Paper.

He noted that all the post-2015 agendas appeared to be in the open because of the difficulty in integrating the post-MDGs and poverty agenda with the SDG agenda. It was still unclear how the framework would be set out. UNESCO had heard from its ministers of education that they felt that EFA was still relevant but considered it to be an unfinished agenda. The concern for UNESCO at that moment was to make a big push to realise the EFA goals before 2015. As a consequence, there was less time available for goal setting. For many countries the real issue was how to put in place high quality balanced education systems which were sustainable. UNESCO was just starting a process to assess what had been achieved, including identifying major bottlenecks that were holding up progress.

The issue of universality had come up strongly in the discussion and UNESCO with UNICEF were organising a regional conference for Europe and North America on 5-6 December 2013. This was the only sector where there had been discussion in these regions. The issue of equity appeared to be important for the forthcoming meeting.

Mr Seim agreed that skills should be seen in the broader perspective in terms of life skills and bringing in the private sector, together with the demands of the learner. Adult literacy had been neglected but in a recent meeting in Paris, there had been the emergence of private partnerships with civil society in the field of literacy. This was a very positive development.

Measurement of quality was important but some member states had asked that diversity, especially cultural diversity, be respected. There may be a problem with introducing global standardised goals. Measurement should take into consideration those with special needs. In a meeting of the Asian states, one country was quite critical of measurement, especially in relation to ethnic minorities whose language might not be the language of instruction. Measurement bodies would face some serious issues if proficiency in reading and writing was seen as the main criteria of measurement in skills - there was a need for caution. Measurement had to take the local context at the community level into consideration.

Mr David Archer, Board Member, Global Campaign for Education, commended the Recommendations and the Issue Paper. One of the biggest achievements was the way they captured the desire for an integrated framework and the process which needed to be followed

to get there. No one would want to see six education goals being reduced to two because then there would be a dysfunctional framework. However, realistically in the post-2015 agenda, there would not be more than one education goal. The big challenge would be to ensure that that goal would be inclusive and to create the space to elaborate the subordinate goals that genuinely contributed to the umbrella goal. The first challenge would be to have a sufficiently inclusive education goal. The subordinate goals in the Issues Paper were well constructed and would fit with EFA but would not be fleshed out and given real meaning in a diplomatic process of high level political negotiation. The best way to ensure that the goals were included was to engage in the EFA process and in the meetings building-up to the Global Conference on EFA in Korea in May 2015. Importantly, the sub-goals must be connected to the over-arching main goal in the big framework. Advocacy was needed to make sure that those in the drafting team in Korea would connect the sub-goals with the umbrella goal. It should be the education community who put substance and flesh on the goal. In doing that, the education community should not be overly concerned with its contribution to education but to look at education's contribution to all of the post-MDGs, SDGs and EFA. By the time the meeting would be held in Korea, a clearer picture on goals would emerge in the other agendas.

Mr Archer stated that, when the umbrella goal and the subordinate goals were framed, it would be important to make certain that education as a human right was articulated. The legal framework on human rights was often missing in international agendas. It was very important to have foundational skills in TVET. Equity was a real concern at all ages - youth and adults. Many did not have the foundational skills (such as basic literacy) which would give them the platform to raise their education and skills levels.

Although the LMTF had identified seven domains of learning, the LMTF process needed to be more inclusive and should not consist of measuring learning only. It was more important to *improve* learning. Emphasis could be put on formative learning, improving classroom practice, the training of teachers, a focus on national systems etc., as outlined in the Issues Paper. Mr Archer was satisfied with how the LMTF had addressed the breath of learning and the role of learning in promoting active citizenship at the country and at the international level, although some elements had been tackled more consistently than others. He praised the work the GMR team had done. GMR was most effective in keeping the international community monitoring the EFA goals. There was a need to have clarity about the future of GMR.

Quality in the Issues Paper was seen as a process and this was commendable. Very few children learned to read and write with untrained teachers and with class sizes of a hundred pupils. Human rights kept education very much in people's minds.

Dr Singh said it was important to reflect further on the right to education. The central role of education was development within a human rights concept. Human rights were universal. Any education framework needed to be universal and without discrimination. The position of the Commonwealth would be better understood if the integrated framework were couched in terms of the right to education. When looking at any education goals - MDGs or others - by definition, all had an educational dimension through the over-arching human rights. The number of goals was not important but the right to education - early childhood, basic education to nine years, focus on lifelong learning etc. - made governments duty bound to implement the goals. Governments had a legal responsibility through the human rights conventions to implement the education goals. It was good that the consensus that emerged in Vienna at the World Conference on Human Rights concentrated on the right to education and to human development. This put the responsibility squarely on the respective governments. In the same way, learning outcomes, quality, equity, and other dimensions were the responsibility of the governments at the national level for the implementation of their obligations to ensure human rights under international law.

Any agenda should necessarily lead to political commitments to international law on human rights, so that the right to education provided a firm foundation for development. There were two issues: the priorities for the development agenda, and how goals could be progressed from

2016 to 2030. The meeting should focus on the central role of education to development linked to the rights to education.

Ms Eghobamien summarised the discussions by noting that there was a need for advocacy to have overarching political, technical, social and economic strands. This meant that there was a need to synthesise clear political, technical and economic messages on standards, access, quality, equity, lifelong education and skills development. The right to education had to be protected but some countries did not have the capacity to do so, and this and other risks and potential setbacks needed to be considered in developing an advocacy strategy for the ministerial Recommendations.

Dr Sayed noted that although there had been a lot of focus on the HLP there were rich, intensive consultations on education and on other priorities and goals. One of the key findings of the joint UNESCO/UNICEF Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda was a set of principles that should involve any discussion of goals. Any post-2015 goals should be based on a human rights approach which included issues of accountability, transparency and universality. Education was a human right in itself as well as an enabling right, fostering social, cultural, economic, civil and political rights.

He also noted that the post-2015 process could only be based on an assessment of the past - that the broader education agenda had not achieved all the goals and inequity was recognised as a core issue. The issue was not just a technical consultation about goals but also about making the case for education, not in its own right but also in relation to the other ten thematic consultations. The relationships between education and water and sanitation and between education and health were given as examples of education being central to other developmental priorities. At the same time it was recognised that there were not going to be many goals in the larger framework - there could be just one goal for education. The Global Consultation had agreed that the goal should be 'equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all', and this was proposed as an overarching goal for education. There was also an understanding that top level political commitment was needed to capture the best possible chance for education in the post-2015 framework.

With regard to advocacy, Dr Sayed noted that key messages were: make clear the place for education; show its relevance to other developmental goals; recognise that it had a high level message; make that message easy to understand, accessible and easy to buy in to. At the same time, it needed to recognise that there were lots of difficult issues which had to be resolved, as the Issues Paper showed; that that would be hard and that there were gaps.

Education was not a narrow goal, and there had to be some kind of measurement to access its progress. Skills were important not just for employment but for decent work. All four issues were reflected in UNESCO/UNICEF's Consultation Synthesis Paper.

The Thematic Consultation had recognised that it was premature to talk about organisational forms in advance of knowing what the goals were. It could not talk about measurement because it did not know what goals would be measured. It was more important to know what the priorities in education were.

With regard to the debate about universality versus specificity, the priority needed to be on low income countries, where targets might be very different. Some goals might be universal, but targets might be very different depending on starting points. In an inequity focused agenda, the target of basic education did not apply to any developed country in terms of numbers. The Thematic Consultation covered many of these issues. The priority was to determine what the top line goal would be.

Professor Lewin noted that the Commonwealth had a lot of comparative advantages: it had 54 member states to back it, with vastly different economies - from the very rich to the very poor;

from the most populated to the least populated. The Commonwealth personified universality and could develop an internationally acceptable agenda. It could speak for small states and it could speak for the Anglophone world. The work it had done was very good and of a high quality. The meeting only had to decide on the wording of the one goal in two sentences.

Professor Hegarty agreed and then explained further the purpose of the LMTF. It was set up to improve quality; indicators by themselves did not describe a situation. He gave the example of blood pressure. The number was just a number, but by analysing the number one could see the health of the person. The LMTF was not about indicators but about the analysis of indicators. These had to be disaggregated by teacher level, absences, student attendance, training, class room facilities etc. He gave the example of science in one country. In the rural areas it was very poor. On disaggregating the indicators it was discovered that there were no science laboratories in rural areas. The government has since put laboratories in the rural areas and the quality of science has risen. The LMTF could contribute to making significant improvements in education.

11. Commonwealth Post-2015 Education Advocacy Strategy and Road Map

Ms Eghobamien requested participants to seek convergence on the post-2015 issues and an overarching goal.

Following discussion among the participants about the one goal and its wording, it was agreed to call it a 'sentence' and not a 'goal' because the Commonwealth Ministers had mandated that there be three goals. Participants agreed the following as the key advocacy message, affirming the ministerial position on the need to:

“Ensure free, quality, basic education for a minimum of nine years, minimising differences in learning outcomes, according to national standards, between more and less advantaged groups, and to provide post-basic education and opportunities for all youth and adults to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to participate fully in society and secure decent work.”

This aligned with the essential features of a 'supergoal' for education based on the principal goals of the Recommendations.

Participants then refined the detail of the key advocacy messages in terms of 'red lines'; for example, advocacy should avoid the term 'affordable education' because this implied a user-cost, and instead the words 'free education' should be used. Participants produced the following list of potential red lines/ non-negotiable issues, and it was agreed that they should be included in a core briefing for Ministers.

Red lines/non-negotiable issues:

- If a single education goal were agreed for post-2015 it needed to be sufficiently broad and inclusive to enable the three goals agreed by Commonwealth Ministers to flow logically from it - and any attempt to pick a more narrowly framed goal that would not achieve that needed to be challenged.
- The principle of genuinely free education needed to be explicit. Any attempt to dilute the language around 'free' by introducing 'affordable' should be rejected.
- It was essential to defend a wider range of learning outcomes and challenge any attempt to reduce the focus to just literacy and numeracy, as testing for narrow targets could seriously distort education systems.
- It was essential to defend education for all - including secondary and higher education, youth and adults - and resist any attempt to focus only on primary education for children.
- It was important to assert that delivering quality public education was a core responsibility

of the state - and to avoid any suggestions that private providers were a significant part of the solution (so-called 'low cost private schools' did not extend access to the poorest and could not be part of a systemic solution).

- It was important to defend the contribution of education to all other development goals - and not to accept a narrow focus just on the economic returns to education (however significant and important these were).
- The central role of national governments in setting contextually appropriate national education policies and priorities in a consultative way with their citizens needed to be defended, rather than having standardised policies and priorities imposed by international donors.
- It was important that all goals and targets were consistent with the right to education as articulated in international human rights conventions so that adopted frameworks were not competing or contradictory with each other or existing frameworks.

Advocacy strategy and road map

The meeting agreed that:

- a) A sub-committee be tasked to work online to finalise the draft advocacy strategy and road map attached as [Appendix 2](#) and develop an advocacy brief that provided guidelines for effective action.
- b) The Commonwealth Secretariat establish a mechanism for co-ordinating advocacy action, monitoring progress, and providing feedback to the Ministerial Working Group, especially through Commonwealth Connects.
- c) The sub-committee submit the finalised strategy and road map document and accompanying brief for approval by the Ministerial Working Group members by 30 October 2013.

12. Finalisation and next steps

Participants agreed the text of the recommendations emanating from the meeting ([Appendix 1](#)). Ms Eghobamien thanked participants for their time and contributions and said the discussions had been very fruitful. The decision to have a smaller technical meeting group to work out the modalities had proved to be useful. She said that the final document would have timelines indicating when meetings would come up and would suggest when actions should be completed, within the next year, so that riding on the CHOGM post 2015 mandate, Commonwealth countries, partners and stakeholders could maximise their advocacy efforts in all the platforms and windows that could be accessed. The document should be ready for dissemination within the following two to three weeks.

Barbados, Jamaica, Mauritius, Mr Archer, Professor Lewin, Mr McLean, Dr Preston, Mr Sinyolo and Mr Wright volunteered to serve on the sub-committee.

The Chair thanked everyone and noted that together they had reached the objectives of the Technical Meeting and this was due to the number of years of experience around the table. In the past two days the post-2015 agenda had been taken forward. He thanked the Commonwealth Secretariat for running the meeting efficiently and for putting together all the relevant documents. The meeting was then closed.

Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education

Technical Meeting on Advocacy Strategy Development

Marlborough House, 18-19 September 2013

Recommendations on Commonwealth Education Post-2015 Advocacy Strategy and Road-Map

1. Representatives of Commonwealth Ministries of Education, at the Technical Meeting of the Ministerial Working Group at Marlborough House, London, 18-19 September 2013, agreed advocacy strategies and options for ensuring that the key Recommendations of the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education (hereafter the Recommendations) captured emerging issues and continued to be reflected in the emerging global framework for development.
2. The meeting was chaired by the Acting Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources of Mauritius, Mr RP Ramlugun, and attended by delegations from Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Representatives from the Brookings Institution, Centre for International Education (University of Sussex, UK), Commonwealth Consortium for Education, Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division, Council for Education in the Commonwealth, Education International, Open Society Foundations, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education participated on the first day. These were joined by representatives of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) on the second day.
3. The meeting recognised and appreciated the efforts made by countries and national and international organisations to ensure that education remained a priority in the post-2015 development agenda. The outcomes of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda were welcomed. The inclusion of education in the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and his draft Report to the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly was noted. The global recognition of the crucial role of educational access, equity and quality to attaining global development goals was commended.
4. The meeting observed that at a crucial moment in the development of the post-2015 framework, the need for further clarity and direction on four key issues had emerged in the global debate. These were (i) ensuring an integrated post-2015 framework for education; (ii) engaging developed countries' ministries of education in the new global agenda; (iii) how to address skills for employability; and (iv) how to ensure measurable, broad-based outcomes for learning.
5. The meeting noted that the period up to 2015 was crucial in the formulation of the development framework and represented a major opportunity for advocacy actions at

national, regional and global level, and that efforts should be accelerated during this period, as would be outlined in the advocacy strategy.

Key advocacy message

6. The meeting reaffirmed the need to ensure free, quality, basic education for a minimum of nine years continuously, minimising differences in learning outcomes, defined by national standards, between more and less advantaged groups, and to provide post-basic education and opportunities for all youth and adults to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to participate fully in society and secure decent work.
7. This message is elaborated in the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group's Recommendations for the post-2015 Development Framework for Education, which remains the basis for detailed advocacy and which is attached as an appendix.
8. The meeting looked into various options for an advocacy strategy and recommended that the following set of actions be taken:

National

- i. Every member country of the Ministerial Working Group and other Commonwealth ministries of education needed to see themselves as a champion of the Recommendations; ministers should take every opportunity to advocate the Recommendations in meetings, presentations and speeches.
- ii. Senior officials should advise Ministers to advocate the Recommendations. The senior management of each ministry should ensure that information was shared on the Recommendations so that all were aware of it and equipped to promote it; this information needed to be prepared in accordance with a brief/guidelines; there needed to be a focal point at each country level who should either be the Minister of Education or a designated high level education official within the Ministry, the role of which would be helpful to co-ordinate information and provide a point of communication with the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- iii. Ministries of education should involve other relevant ministries and government bodies, such as health, youth, environment, economic development, justice, presidents and prime ministers' offices, high commissions etc., so that they could advocate the Recommendations in other forums, and within cabinets and national assemblies.
- iv. Ministries of education should be emboldened by an ambitious and broad agenda, not by narrower donor priorities.
- v. Ministries of education should engage specifically with ministries of foreign affairs and ministries of finance and planning to agree strategies for advocating the Recommendations and securing resources to fund their implementation.
- vi. Ministries should integrate the Recommendations in their respective strategic plans.
- vii. A broad base of civil society, including teacher, children, youth and parents' organisations, should be engaged in the advocacy process, including through partnerships between ministries and stakeholders. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Commonwealth People's Forum and a meeting of Senior Officials at the Committee of the Whole would provide opportunities, and ministries of education could work with civil society to prepare for these.
- viii. Countries should promote the Recommendations with representatives of development agencies operating in their countries.
- ix. Ministries of education should organise specific activities with government bodies and civil society to raise awareness of the Recommendations and promote co-ordinated action, reporting the outcomes to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Regional

- x. There should be a specific focus on regional and sub-regional level intergovernmental and civil society organisations and the regional Education For All (EFA) consultations. The organisations would include (but not be limited to) the:
 - Africa Network Campaign on Education For All;
 - African Union;
 - Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education;
 - Association for the Development of Education in Africa;
 - Association of Southeast Asian Nations;
 - Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación;
 - Caribbean Community;
 - East African Community;
 - Economic Community Of West African States;
 - European Union;
 - Organization of American States;
 - Pacific Islands Forum;
 - South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation;
 - Southern African Development Community.
- xi. Commonwealth member countries in strategic positions in international processes should use these to promote the Recommendations, e.g. Antigua and Barbuda would be President of the UN General Assembly 2013-14 and Uganda in 2014-15; Kenya would be co-chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and Nigeria was Chair of the African Union Ministers of Education.
- xii. Countries should identify allies at regional and sub-regional levels so that countries' representatives to these forums could carry forward the message.

Commonwealth

- xiii. A formal communication should be made from the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group to UNICEF, UNESCO and the UN explaining exactly what requests were being made in regard to the Recommendations.
- xiv. The Recommendations should be presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, and the Secretariat should prepare a strategy to ensure this.
- xv. Teleconferencing could be used among Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group members to share resources, learning, progress and opportunities, and to co-ordinate action.
- xvi. The Commonwealth should try to secure representation on the drafting committee(s) of the global framework; efforts should be made to engage with the committee(s) at the highest level.
- xvii. Fall-back positions should be prepared to respond to emerging challenges to the proposals in the Recommendations so that EFA-level detail was not lost; for example, by consolidating the three principal goals into one.
- xviii. A brief and/or guidelines for advocating the Recommendations should be prepared.
- xix. A robust co-ordination mechanism needed to be put in place, to harmonise the advocacy activities, provide a reporting system, follow up on the issues paper and ensure that a common message on the post-2015 agenda was promulgated by Commonwealth organisations.
- xx. The Recommendations should be promoted at the Commonwealth Youth Forum.
- xxi. The Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group should continue to lead on advocating for the Recommendations, and report to 19CCEM on progress.

Global

- xxii. A particular focus should be on sharing information by countries' representatives on the UNESCO Executive Board and at the General Conference.
- xxiii. Countries should advocate the Recommendations in their national reports to UNESCO's EFA reviews, and in their UN's MDG's country report.
- xxiv. Countries should advocate for the Recommendations at the UN General Assembly and to the UN Secretary-General's Education First Initiative, including through Education First Champion Countries Australia, Bangladesh and South Africa.
- xxv. The Recommendations should be promoted to the Global Partnership for Education, through board members Ghana and Sierra Leone.
- xxvi. The GCE should be engaged as an ally in the promotion of the Recommendations.
- xxvii. A special strategy needed to be prepared to target the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, UN General Assembly and other UN processes, in collaboration with Education International.
- xxviii. Side meetings at international forums should be organised to promote the Recommendations.
- xxix. Advocacy should include a specific focus on India and South Africa as members of the BRICS Group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), and the Group of Eight (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States of America).

All levels

- xxx. The unique selling point of the Recommendations above other proposals - that they had been endorsed by a multinational group at the ministerial level and that they provided a ready-made framework for goals and financing - should be highlighted.
- xxxi. Use should be made of technological means, including Commonwealth Connects and the media, including social media, and other ways of reaching people, to undertake general marketing and dissemination of the Recommendations, co-ordinate action, share outcomes and monitor progress, and the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group should be kept informed of such progress.

Next steps

9. The meeting requested that:

- a) A sub-committee be tasked to finalise the advocacy strategy and road map and develop an advocacy brief that provided guidelines for effective action;
- b) The Commonwealth Secretariat establish a mechanism for co-ordinating advocacy action, monitoring progress, and providing feedback to the Ministerial Working Group;
- c) The sub-committee finalise the strategy and road map document and disseminate for approval by Ministerial Working Group members by 30 October 2013.

Appendix 2: Advocacy strategy and roadmap

Appendix 2: Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education					
Advocacy Strategy					
Purpose	To ensure consistent and systematic effort to sustain the Education Ministerial Working Group recommendations through the post-2015 agenda development process				
Over-all Objective	To mobilise action and build up critical voices to amplify the Commonwealth education priorities and position on the post-2015 development framework				
Specific objectives	Promote engagement of countries, reporting mechanisms, networking and tracking progress				
Modalities	Action	Roles and responsibilities	Challenges	Opportunities	Comments and follow-up
Country level	Advocate the Ministerial Recommendations at key national meetings, presentations and speeches.	Commonwealth Heads of Government, Ministers of Education and Cabinet members	Accessing high level government representatives for the purpose of advocacy. Identifying and coordinating advocates in federated systems.	CHOGM, Cabinet meetings and Ministerial events	Permanent Secretaries of Education Ministries to provide guidance
	Advise Ministers to advocate the Recommendations.	Senior Officials, Ministries of Education	Possible misalignment of individual countries recommendations with Commonwealth Education recommendations	Intra Ministry policy briefings MoE Intra net updates	

Involve other relevant ministries and government bodies, such as health, youth, environment, economic development, justice, presidents and prime ministers' offices, high commissions etc., so that they could advocate the Recommendations in other forums, and within cabinets and national assemblies.	Ministries of Education Ministries of National Planning	Lack of lines of communication between Ministries or departments within Ministries. Lack of fit of Commonwealth education recommendations with other sectors recommendations.	Inter-ministerial working groups and Ministerial coordination committees on human development	
Engage specifically with ministries of foreign affairs and ministries of finance and planning to agree strategies for advocating the Recommendations and securing resources to fund their implementation.	Ministries of Education	Possible misalignment of Commonwealth recommendations with already adopted policies, plans and strategies.		
Integrate the Recommendations in strategic plans	Ministries of Education		National planning reviews and consultations	
Engage civil society, including teacher, children, youth and parents' organisations, in the advocacy process, including through partnerships between ministries and stakeholders.	Ministries of Education		The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Commonwealth People's Forum and a meeting of Senior Officials at the Committee of the Whole would provide opportunities, and ministries of education could work with civil society to prepare for these.	
Promote the Recommendations with representatives of development agencies operating in their countries	Countries		Meetings of the joint review mechanisms	

	Organise specific activities with government bodies and civil society to raise awareness of the Recommendations and promote co-ordinated action, reporting the outcomes to the Commonwealth Secretariat.	Ministries of Education			
Regional level	There should be a specific focus on regional and sub-regional level intergovernmental and civil society organisations and the regional Education For All (EFA) consultations.	Countries		<p>Africa Network Campaign on Education For All; African Union; Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education; Association for the Development of Education in Africa; Association of Southeast Asian Nations; Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación; Caribbean Community; East African Community; Economic Community Of West African States; European Union; Organization of American States; Pacific Islands Forum; South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation; Southern African Development Community.</p>	

	Use Commonwealth member countries in strategic positions in international processes to promote the Recommendations	Commonwealth member countries in strategic positions in international processes e.g. Antigua and Barbuda would be President of the UN General Assembly 2013-14 and Uganda in 2014-15; Kenya would be co-chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and Nigeria was Chair of the African Union Ministers of Education.			
	Identify allies at regional and sub-regional levels; countries' representatives to these forums could carry forward the message	Countries			
Global level	Share information on the Recommendations to UNESCO.	Countries' representatives on the UNESCO Executive Board and at the General Conference.			
	Advocate the Recommendations in their national reports to UNESCO's EFA reviews.	Countries			
	Advocate for the Recommendations at the UN General Assembly and to the UN Secretary-General's Education First Initiative, including through Education First Champion Countries Australia, Bangladesh and South Africa	Chair Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group; Education First Champion Countries Australia, Bangladesh and South Africa			
	The Recommendations should be promoted to the Global Partnership for Education	GPE board members Ghana and Sierra Leone			

The GCE should be engaged as an ally in the promotion of the Recommendations	Countries			
A special strategy needed to be prepared to target the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, UN General Assembly and other UN processes,	Countries in collaboration with Education International.			
Side meetings at international forums should be organised to promote the Recommendations.	Partners			
Advocacy should include a specific focus on India and South Africa as members of the BRICS Group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), and the Group of Eight (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and USA)	Partners			
Advocacy should encourage the recommitment to the pledge that no country with a credible plan should fail to achieve the new goals set for lack of financial resources				
It should also assert that no child should fail to complete a full cycle of basic education as a result of household poverty and inability to pay direct and indirect costs of schooling				
A fully independent institution with a ring fenced budget should be maintained to monitor progress on access, equity, and transitions and continue the work of the Global Monitoring Report.				

	Any global monitoring of learning outcomes should be fully independent of commercial interests in assessment				
Commonwealth	A formal communication should be made to the UN, UNESCO and UNICEF explaining exactly what requests were being made in regard to the Recommendations.	Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group			
	The Recommendations should be presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting	The Secretariat should prepare a strategy to ensure this.			
	Teleconferencing could be used among Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group members to share resources, learning, progress and opportunities, and to co-ordinate action.	Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group			
	Try to secure representation on the drafting committee(s) of the global framework; efforts should be made to engage with the committee(s) at the highest level.	The Commonwealth			
	Fall-back positions should be prepared to respond to emerging challenges to the proposals in the Recommendations so that EFA-level detail was not lost; for example, by consolidating the three principal goals into one.	CMWG Sub-Committee			
	A brief/guidelines for advocating the Recommendations should be prepared.	CMWG Sub-Committee			

<p>A robust co-ordination mechanism needed to be put in place, to harmonise the advocacy activities, provide a reporting system, follow up on the issues paper and ensure that a common message on the post-2015 agenda was promulgated by Commonwealth organisations.</p>	<p>CMWG Sub-Committee</p>			
<p>The Recommendations should be promoted at the Commonwealth Youth Forum.</p>	<p>ComSec Youth Division</p>			
<p>Continue to lead on advocating for the Recommendations, and report to 19CCEM on progress.</p>	<p>Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group</p>			

Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education

Technical Meeting on Advocacy Strategy Development

Marlborough House, 18-19 September 2013

Agenda and timetable

Technical working group meeting

Wednesday 18 September 2013

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 0900-0930 | Registration |
| 0930-0945 | Welcome, Introduction and Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esther Eghobamien, <i>Interim Director, Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD)</i> |
| 0945-1000 | Context and Objectives of Technical Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr RP Ramlugun, <i>Acting Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Education, Mauritius</i> |
| 1000-1015 | Update of the Commonwealth WG Post-2105 Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pauline Greaves, <i>Head, Education Section, STPD</i> |
| 1015-1100 | The Post-2015 Development Agenda Process; Presentation and analysis of Emerging Education Concerns in the Post-2015 Development Agenda process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Process - Emerging Issues |
| 1100-1130 | <i>Refreshment Break</i> |
| 1130-1300 | Discussion of Issues Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of Opportunities and Gaps in the Post-2015 Development Agenda Process |
| 1300-1400 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 1400-1530 | Technical Session: Development of Advocacy Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of Draft Commonwealth Advocacy Strategy and Road Map • Discussion on Stakeholder engagement priorities |
| 1530-1545 | <i>Refreshment Break</i> |
| 1545-1700 | Technical Session: Development of Advocacy Strategy (cont.) |
| 1700-1730 | Finalisation of Commonwealth Education Post-2015 Advocacy Strategy and Road Map |



Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education

Technical Meeting on Advocacy Strategy Development

Marlborough House, 18-19 September 2013

Agenda and timetable

Stakeholders meeting

Thursday 19 September 2013

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 0900-0930 | Arrival |
| 0930-1000 | Welcome, Introductions and Purpose of Meeting |
| 1000-1030 | Overview of Issues Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation analysis and discussion of the issues emerging from the Post-2015 Development Agenda process |
| 1030-1100 | <i>Refreshment Break</i> |
| 1100-1300 | Roundtable on Emerging Issues and Commonwealth Post-2015 Education Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated development framework• Universality of goals• TVET/skills for employability• Measuring learning outcomes |
| 1300-1400 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 1400-1430 | Summary Discussion on Roundtable Issues |
| 1430-1530 | Discussion on Commonwealth Education Post-2015 Advocacy Strategy and Road Map |
| 1530-1545 | <i>Refreshment Break</i> |
| 1545-1630 | Discussion on Commonwealth Education Post-2015 Advocacy Strategy and Road Map (cont.) |
| 1630-1700 | Finalisation and Next Steps |
| 1700-1730 | Closing |

Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education

Technical Meeting on Advocacy Strategy Development

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Issues paper

Background

The current global development framework for education has three main components: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially MDGs 2 and 3; the Education for All (EFA) goals; and the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). The first two expire in 2015, the last in 2014. The debate around their replacements has centred on UN processes, including the UN Secretary-General's (SG) High Level Panel (HLP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Education First initiative, and UNESCO- and UNICEF-led national, regional and global consultations.

In order to influence these processes and ensure that the adopted replacement framework reflects Commonwealth priorities, a Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education was established at the 18th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in August 2012. The Working Group met in December 2012 and produced recommendations for the framework. These have formed the basis of Commonwealth Education Ministers' advocacy for education in the new framework.

Alongside this are a number of other global processes which might influence the architecture and implementation for the adopted framework. Given the trend towards measurable outcomes in development, and concerns for the quality of education, which was felt to be under-addressed in the original MDGs/EFA, the creation of a global assessment framework for education outcomes is a possibility. Foremost among the groups working on this is the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), convened by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at Brookings, in which the Commonwealth Secretariat has been represented.

The UNESCO/UNICEF Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda process and the UNSG's HLP process have both reported (UNESCO and UNICEF 2013; UN 2013a), and the LMTF is currently at stage two of a three stage process of developing a framework. Most of the Commonwealth's priorities are reflected in the UN outcomes, especially the principle that the new framework should be based on expanding access, reducing inequity and improving quality. However, a number of major issues are as yet unresolved. These include:

1. **Integrated development framework:** It is unclear whether the three current education components (MDGs, EFA and DESD) are intended to be unified into a single framework (as recommended by the Working Group);
2. **Universality:** Although the HLP Report advocates that all countries should implement the new global goals, the extent to which developed countries' ministries of education are preparing for this is unclear;

3. **Skills:** Effectively integrating skills for employment into the framework requires further thought and clear direction;
4. **Measurement of quality:** The influence that emerging global learning assessment frameworks might have on the framework and its implementation needs to be discussed.

This paper briefly discusses these four issues. For a more detailed analysis, please refer to the *Issues Paper Synopsis* prepared for 18CCEM (Commonwealth Secretariat 2012a) and the *Background Paper* prepared for the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group's Recommendations (Commonwealth Secretariat 2012b).

1. Integrated development framework

Currently, there are three principal sets of goals for education in the global development framework. They each have different functions.

The two MDGs for education are 'headline' goals - short, snappy and superficially inarguable goals for universal primary education and gender parity. They form a highly visible and easily understood platform for advocacy, and have proved effective in galvanising political will and mobilising resources. However, because they focus on a necessarily narrow area, they have contributed to over-emphasis on certain aspects of education, such as access, to the possible detriment of other areas, such as quality (Melamed 2012).

The six EFA goals are much more technical. The full list of key indicators against which progress towards the goals is measured runs to 51 (UNESCO 2013). While any list of indicators will be in some way reductive, the EFA indicators cover a broader range of education issues - including quality - at all levels. The EFA goals have been important, in some ways, at the policy and implementation level, in guiding governments in the education reforms necessary to achieve all-round improvement in educational outcomes, as they have provided an agenda for negotiations between donors and developing countries. Resources have therefore tended to coalesce around EFA principles. However, the number and complexity of the goals and indicators arguably make them less appropriate for a non-specialist audience and therefore it has been claimed that they have had limited usefulness for leveraging political will; this includes on internal policy, where the impact of the global goals is contested (Fukuda-Parr 2012). The DESD included a number of intersectoral programmes designed to mainstream ESD. While it has succeeded in raising the profile of ESD, ESD has nonetheless tended to be side-lined as an adjunct to other global education initiatives, and therefore implementation has been weak (Hiebert 2013).

For post-MDGs and post-EFA, UNESCO has noted that, 'due to flawed design these education goals are technically overlapping and limited in scope' (UNESCO 2012, 4). Consequently,

the two frameworks should be aligned so that they effectively constitute a single framework for education structured with two levels of goals. The first level would comprise a small number of principal goals - goals which capture a major dimension, as in the current MDGs. Each principal goal would contain a small number of subordinate goals. These second level goals would be more technical, like the current EFA goals (Commonwealth Secretariat 2012b, 14).

This would ensure that both the political and technical functions of the MDGs and EFA are retained, and enable ESD to be mainstreamed more effectively. It would remove duplication, make gaps clearer, encourage a holistic approach to education, and make multi-sectoral linkages easier to identify. Moreover, eliminating competing frameworks would dramatically reduce reporting burdens and limit the number of instruments to be taken account of when developing policy, enhancing the likelihood of it being integrated. Aligning the frameworks would also make it easier to place education within an integrated global development framework. The possibility of combining the post-MDGs with the emerging Sustainable Development Goals presents an exciting opportunity to achieve this.

Clearly, agreement on the need to unify the frameworks needs to be achieved before the

detailed design process begins. At the moment, it is not clear that there is a working consensus on the issue. Under the heading of providing quality education and lifelong learning (Goal 3), the HLP report identifies four goals: (a) expanded access and completion of early childhood care and education; universal completion of (b) primary and (c) lower secondary education to minimum standards; and (d) increased number of youth and adults with skills for employability (UN 2013a). This represents a compromise position which lacks the simplicity of the MDGs for education, and the technical integrity of EFA. The HLP is silent on the issues of whether there should be a replacement EFA. Urgent advocacy is required to ensure that a workable structural solution to the post-2015 architecture for education is agreed as soon as possible.

2. Universality

Universality - the idea that global goals should apply to all countries - is a key element of the emerging vision for the development agenda beyond 2015, along with a need for a 'new global partnership' that 'recognises shared interests and mutual responsibilities', based on the 'values of equity, solidarity and human rights' (UN 2013b, 15).

This reflects, perhaps, that the MDGs suffered from a perception of being 'donor-led' as a result of the relatively exclusive and technocratic process that led to their formulation. It also reflects the changed geo-political landscape and the rise of 'newly active' and 'emerging donors' from Brazil, China, India, Russia, Gulf States and others. These new development partners claim to emphasise a rejection of traditional donor-recipient relations, empathy and solidarity through south-south collaboration, experience of recent development success, mutual benefit and reciprocity (King 2013). Given the rapid pace of geo-political change, over the life of the post-2015 settlement, the current categories of 'donors' and 'recipients' are likely to become more blurred and less relevant.

However, despite the rhetoric, there is concern that discourse surrounding the new education goals has failed to escape the 'traditional' patterns. Traditional donor countries continue to be represented in discussions by their aid agencies rather than ministries of education, and currently the 'south' seems less engaged in the intensive debates than northern agencies, NGOs and think-tanks (King 2013).

Why is universality important?

Despite the successes of the MDGs in improving the targeting and flow of aid, they have also been criticised for being 'donor-led'. This, it could be argued, contributed to a lack of ownership at national level which has compromised the effectiveness of their implementation, and the adoption of a unified structure which disregarded countries' initial conditions (Bandara 2013). Accordingly, the HLP identified the need for a new global partnership, which 'should capture and will depend on a spirit of mutual respect and mutual benefit' (UN 2013b, 13), as well as being based on the values of equity, solidarity and human rights outlined by the UN SG's report. It is unlikely that any country would claim to have no further progress to make on access, equity or quality in its education system, yet without a set of goals that commit all countries to action in these areas, the proposed values of the new partnership will ring hollow and risk failing to learn the lessons of the MDGs.

Universality may also be viewed as critical to the successful realisation of the aspiration of the post-2015 development agenda to create a world where all people realise their rights and no one is left behind. Where MDG targets are likely to be missed, inequality within, rather than between countries is a key significant factor. For example, excluded populations within Middle Income Countries (MICs) account for a large share of the world's poor (Commonwealth Secretariat 2012a). Furthermore, inequality is rising in rich and poor countries alike (UN 2013b) and widening gaps between rich and poor impact not just on access, but on the quality of educational outcomes (Commonwealth Secretariat 2012a). The question of equitable access to quality education is therefore not just a matter for Lower Income Countries (LICs) and MICs

(Commonwealth Secretariat 2012a). As the UN SG's report states, 'in order to leave no one behind and bring everyone forward, actions are needed to promote equality of opportunity' (UN 2013b, 13). Progress on addressing inequality of access and learning outcomes due to household income, gender, special needs, location or social group within *all* countries will therefore be necessary for any ambitious and fully inclusive global education target to be met.

Enabling universality in the post-2015 framework for education

Aid will retain a critical role in development progress post-2015, and therefore the wider framework will need to address commitments by donors (established and emerging) to aid for education, including the honouring of existing commitments (UN 2013b). However, in order to enable universal commitments that include High Income Countries (HICs), the formulation of the goals will need to recognise the huge variation in current conditions and capacity across all countries.

This might be addressed by having universal goals to which all countries commit, but with differentiated deadlines for reaching the goals that recognise the starting point of each country and its capacity to progress. Alternatively, the goals themselves could be relative rather than absolute; for example, 'reduction in differences in learning outcomes attributable to social inequality reduced by X% within Y years'.

This would be in keeping with the 'importance of arriving at a single and coherent development agenda, applicable to all countries, while taking into account regional, national and local circumstances and priorities' (UN 2013b, 13).

With regards to education, some global goals on access to education may be retained that have little or no applicability to HICs. However, the formulation set out by the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group for the principal education goals for equity and quality, which draw on national learning assessments (more contextually based than global learning standards) and are relative, present a framework wholly compatible with universal adoption.

Advocacy

Given the lack of genuine peer engagement from HICs' ministries of education, advocacy should be considered to:

- ensure that donors, both established and emerging, genuinely commit to universality;
- ensure that *all* countries engage their ministries of education in discussions with their peers, and that 'donors' are not solely represented by their aid agencies;
- ensure that 'southern' governments engage fully in the debates over the post-2015 formulation to ensure they are not dominated by northern agencies and NGOs;
- engage civil society, including in the 'north', to help build public pressure and political support for HICs' embracing of universality.

Given that the Commonwealth espouses the values of universality, equity and solidarity within its own association, Commonwealth forums and connections within and beyond education may offer a suitable channel for advocacy with member states. Furthermore, HICs are sometimes reluctant to avail themselves fully to global commitments, therefore engaging civil society in the north may also be required in order to help build public pressure and political support for universal commitments.

3. TVET and skills for employability

Education, including technical, vocational education and training (TVET), is fundamental to achieving the central development objective of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030; thus, it

needs to have a prominent position in the post-2015 development framework. While the education agenda of the MDGs and EFA remains an unfinished business, new priority areas have emerged, with calls for skills development and TVET being at the heart of the post-2015 education agenda.

The MDGs did not place sufficient emphasis on 'youth' who, if combined with adolescents, constitute one quarter of the world's population, while half of the Commonwealth's population is below the age of 25 years (Commonwealth Secretariat 2013). At the same time, the youth labour force (those aged 15-24 years) without work but available for and seeking employment is high in many countries, with a youth unemployment rate of 40 per cent in The Gambia, 27.1 per cent in Jamaica, 41.7 per cent in Namibia, 48.2 per cent in South Africa and 18.9 per cent in the UK (Index Mundi 2012). This, in turn, has resulted in a shift in the global debate towards an emphasis on 'skills development' and young people's transition from education to the labour market.

Education - and upper secondary education and TVET in particular - substantially increases the prospects of finding employment (OECD 2011). However, employment cannot always be considered a direct consequence of successful skills development; investments in formal education have to be matched by labour, social and economic policies that support sustainable growth and welfare.

In order to equip young people with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in the broader context of globalised economies, the quality and the accessibility of technical and vocational education must be improved. In fact, a narrow focus on technical or vocational skills required for specific jobs might result in both fewer job opportunities and more limited chances to participate in a knowledge-based society. Young people do not only require skills for employment but also skills for life as responsible citizens and active agents in shaping their future (UNESCO 1989).

TVET should also provide enhanced opportunities for those who have not been successful in primary or secondary school and for those who are marginalised or economically disadvantaged. TVET can help ameliorate these social disadvantages by ensuring that all individuals have access to entry level qualifications, through literacy and numeracy and general education programmes, and recognition of their prior learning. TVET should also provide guidance counselling and other support services to assist individuals to achieve better and more secure jobs and to participate in further and higher education. Second chance TVET programmes must be of the highest quality and have the same status and recognition as other forms of education.

Qualified teachers, including instructors and trainers, are fundamental to the provision of quality TVET. TVET teachers must be appropriately trained, resourced, rewarded and recognised for the knowledge, skills and qualifications they have developed in the workplace as well as for their knowledge, skills and qualifications as teachers.

The current global economic climate and scarcity of resources presents a challenge in responding to the different educational needs and ensuring the right to education for all young people. Insufficient public funding has resulted in increased costs for students, which impacts directly on the access and equitable participation in TVET; therefore, tuition fees and other compulsory charges should be progressively eliminated.

The debates have raised important issues regarding young people's transitions and pathways to decent work: work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families; offers better prospects for personal development and social integration and freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; offers equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men (ILO 2012); provides opportunities for progression routes for more specialised skills development, reskilling and upskilling for adults, including through industrial partnerships and technology; and that fosters good governance and enabling environments. All of these elements of skills development should be taken into account in the formulation of the post-2015 development framework for education.

A goal on TVET and skills must be formulated within the context of life-long learning, and the aim of ensuring universal lower and upper secondary education, as well as increasing access and diversifying the pathways to further education. While recognising the role of education for employability, the difficulties of predicting the exact set of skills that will be demanded by the labour market necessitates a balanced approach, with emphasis being placed on a broad notion of quality education, as well as transversal skills, such as problem-solving and critical and higher-order thinking.

Critical questions that the TVET/skills goal/s should consider and address:

1. How do education systems, including TVET pathways, at secondary level and beyond, guarantee a balance between providing individuals with relevant skills and general knowledge that meet the demands of modern workplaces, on the one hand, and prepares them as active citizens, on the other hand? What actions will be required by planners and what will be the implications?
2. Economic transformation requires effective participation of public and private sectors as well as civil society organisations - how will this be done and what monitoring processes will be in place?
3. Is there sufficient emphasis on the role of the private sector and stakeholders in relation to skills development, including entrepreneurial skills? How will industry and employers' engagement be ensured? What compelling strategies and measuring mechanisms could be applied to make the goal specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound, and avoid the vagueness of EFA 3?
4. How should a new education framework address the growing group of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)?
5. How could TVET be configured as lifelong learning for everyone, not specific groups of people?
6. The link between TVET and the general education system needs to be set out through clearly defined pathways.

4. Measuring education quality

A consideration of measurement in relation to the post-2015 global education goal suggests that it faces a challenge in achieving balance: how not to provide too much information, or too little; how neither to be too universal, nor too specific; how to drive efforts to reach the goal without getting lost in the woods. In these, and in a number of other areas, measurement has to be just right.

The 'new' discourse on learning

The prevailing discourse about education quality regards education as a process and learning as an outcome (Center for Global Development 2013), enabling a shift from a discussion on education quality to a discussion on learning. The rationale is that the Millennium Development Goals and the Education For All goals focused primarily on education access and that the improvements in access have not been commensurate with the improvements in quality. A causal relationship is often implied but not always explained. The emphasis on learning outcomes is thus presented as an effort to redress the lack of emphasis on education quality; it strongly echoes positions well-established in the World Bank, reflected strongly, for example, in the 2020 Education Strategy (2011) and the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), a framework for driving systems-wide reforms in education through focusing on an analysis of learning outcomes.

The privileging of learning outcomes in the discussion about education quality prompts three essential criticisms: one, it leads to a narrow conception of quality that is reflected only in

partial measures, typically mathematics and numeracy (Barrett 2011); two, it confines the discussion on quality to a discussion on outcomes, neglecting the process of teaching and learning and the essential inputs for assuring quality (Glewwe et al. 2010); and three, it dislocates quality from equity (Tikly and Barrett 2007). There will be different understandings of the intention and meaning of this ‘new’ discourse; however, any measures ultimately adopted for the global education goal will have consequences of their own, unintended as well as intended. The measures therefore need to be discussed on their own merits.

Are indicators for literacy, numeracy and ‘life skills for work’ sufficient for improving quality?

Education International’s (EI) analysis of the High Level Panel’s report (Education International 2013) points out that the sentiments contained in the text of the report, the commitment to the full development of the human personality in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948), and the proposed goal itself, i.e. to ‘Provide quality education and lifelong learning’, are not fully reflected in the proposed targets. EI considers the High Level Panel (HLP) targets to be fully necessary but not sufficient for giving young people a chance to realise their full potential in life. A related critique accepts that formal education should provide instrumental benefits that prepare youth for the world of work. It regards this to be a purely human capital approach, which, even though it may be cognisant of the detrimental economic effects both of inequity and poor quality education, does not address human development beyond its economic ramifications (Wils et al. 2005; Tikly and Barrett 2011). This critique proposes a capabilities approach (Sen 1999) to identify three types of benefits that a rights-based approach to education should provide: instrumental, intrinsic and positional benefits (Unterhalter et al. 2007). Instrumental benefits involve the ability to utilise skills to participate in the economy; intrinsic benefits involve the cultural, social and personal abilities that continue to add value to life regardless of employment status; positional benefits confer respect that enables the redress of racial, gender and class inequality (Brighouse et al. 2008). Hard skills may be easier to quantify, grade and compare, and thus appear to be more convenient to measure in relation to a global education goal; by this critique they nevertheless remain partial and potentially misleading indicators of education quality.

Is it adequate to manage education quality only from the perspective of learning outcomes?

The idea of ‘management by objectives’ (MBO) has been hugely significant in shaping management in the past half-century. This approach was initially developed in the area of business management but came to be influential in the public sector and management generally; it has come to underpin the current belief that society, like organisations, can be managed (Kamens and McNeely 2010). ‘What gets measured; gets managed’, Peter Drucker’s (1954) dictum that sums up the MBO approach, thus also undergirds the formulation of the current MDGs, particularly the binary conception of the ‘broad-goals-and-specific-targets’, in the post-2015 framework. The LMTF sets three questions to frame its three reports, the last of which is due for completion later in November 2013: What learning is important for children and youth? How should learning outcomes be measured? And, how can the measurement of learning outcomes improve education quality? (Learning Metrics Task Force 2013). Each of these questions is a crucial question for education; the third, which frames the final and as yet unpublished report, captures the MBO assumption for the education sector very concisely: that measuring learning outcomes improves education quality.

A glance at selected frameworks for quality education (OECD 1995; European Commission 2000; National Council of Educational Research and Training 2003; UNESCO 2007) reveals that measuring quality involves a mix of indicators for different ‘dimensions’ of education: resources and materials, classroom practice, content, pedagogy, and learning outcomes; i.e. what are referred to succinctly as education inputs, processes and outcomes (Barrett et al. 2008). A closer inspection of these frameworks may reveal a lack of empirical bases or a relative arbitrariness in indicator selection but certainly reveals a lack of emphasis on pedagogy and the education process (Alexander 2008). For education practitioners, quality in the classroom involves

numerous preconditions for learning, not all of which may be readily translatable into quantifiable measures in the parametric sense. The Campaign for Norms and Standards by the membership-based students' organisation in South Africa, Equal Education, illustrates the importance learners ascribe to adequate resources, signifying the importance of inputs in grassroots struggles for quality and the right to education. Such movements suggest that if we wish to measure accountably, we should measure what we treasure, not the other way round.

Who benefits from the extension of quality monitoring beyond national boundaries?

Given the growth and policy influence of international standards and the rise of international comparative testing over the past two decades, two questions present themselves: What is the evidence that the global thirst for comparative data on learning outcomes leads to improvements in education quality? Who benefits from monitoring quality beyond national borders, or indeed from monitoring quality at all? On the surface there would seem to be some consensus that learning standards contribute usefully to improving policy. Yet, as equity and quality are interlinked in classroom practice as in public policy, it is not always sure that the external monitoring of quality has the desired effects on improving practice. External standards can be politicised and intrusive and frequently problematic in that they animate technical and bureaucratic solutions in order to improve standards (Harvey 2004) instead of enabling teachers and schools with the support they need to achieve quality in the process of learning. If the point of monitoring quality is to achieve improvements in quality teaching and learning, monitoring quality should provide the analysis for improvements in practice; this would be its prime purpose.

The reconfiguration of public services within neo-liberal globalization has placed education squarely in the headlamps of the private sector; this should not be overlooked when asking who benefits from monitoring education quality. For business, the education sector in APEC countries, for example, represents a market worth a relatively stable \$1,600 billion dollars (Aik Hoe Lim and Sanner 2011) within a wider volatile global market. The world's largest education multinational and largest testing company within this 'industry', Pearson, made an income of \$7 billion in 2011 (Pearson 2012); the top 20 education multinationals are worth a combined \$36 billion; only a foot in the door to the larger market and with room for vigorous growth.

The abiding questions with respect to global monitoring relate to who owns the information, who benefits from it and how it can advance the right to education for all learners (Eaton 2004). Unless measurement is meaningful for the measured, indicators for the global education goal will be indicators for aid conditionality, little more.

Strategic considerations for managing measurement within the global framework

While the global goals framework has had a significant effect on the education sector, the EFA goals have perhaps had a more direct influence on policy and education delivery: quite significantly through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), formerly the EFA-FTI (Fast Track Initiative), which has provided developing countries with much-needed financial assistance for meeting their targets; the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), which, particularly through its stronger affiliates, has been quite effective in mobilising civil society in support of the goals; and through the Global Monitoring Report (GMR), which has set an important benchmark for quality in its monitoring of progress towards the goals based on the EFA framework. What happens to the EFA movement is perhaps the most significant discussion to be had in relation to the global education goal in the post-2015 framework. It is an oddly absent discussion.

The position advanced by EI and the GCE, reflecting what their constituencies would support, is that there should be post-EFA goals as well as a post-MDG global goal in the post-2015 framework. An important set of strategic questions logically follow: what then should be covered in the global goal? How should post-EFA differ from the current formulation of EFA goals? How can an effective strategy for convincing the international donor community to support a

continuation of EFA be built? The set of strategic questions that follow from the position that there should be a single unified framework under the global goals include: how to secure a balanced, comprehensive education agenda within the global goals framework? How to ensure that the key questions relating to education, or learning, are adequately addressed within a framework that is ultimately to be decided by non-educationists?

Real consequences for the way the education sector is organised at a global level are attendant on the position that prevails and the answers to these questions. From the point of view of measurement the question is: What is the fate of the GMR post-2015 if there is no post-EFA? The GMR plans two years ahead so without a clear indication of continued support relatively soon, the capacity to produce a report post-2015 stands to be compromised. This would be a huge loss for the sector. Is the LMTF positioning itself to take on the GMR mantle in the event that there is a single unified goal and no continuation of EFA, given that this is the *raison d'être* for the GMR? How does the GPE position and transform itself from being the principal supporter of EFA; is it already doing so? What could be the outcome of the UNESCO Seoul meeting in 2015: will there be a groundswell of support for post-EFA, or the confidence that a single unified goal, within what is likely to be a framework for sustainable development goals, will meet the needs of the sector? The Commonwealth could be a crucial voice in this debate.

Web addresses (URLs) to background documents

- Report of the UN HLP on Post-2015 Development Agenda: (http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf);
- Report of the UN SG to 68th UNGA: (http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/202&referer=/english/&Lang=E);
- Report by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network: (<http://unsdsn.org/files/2013/06/130613-SDSN-An-Action-Agenda-for-Sustainable-Development-FINAL.pdf>);
- Report from the Global Compact Office: (http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/news_events/9.1_news_archives/2013_06_18/UN_GC_Post2015_Report.pdf);
- Report from the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Agenda: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/file/389575/download/423267>;
Summary: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223025E.pdf>.

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Appendix 5: Recommendations of the Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education (summary)

Principal goals	Illustrative Indicators	Target
1. Every child completes a full cycle of a minimum of 9 years of continuous, free basic education and demonstrates learning achievement consistent with national standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of boys and girls who complete a minimum of 9 years of basic education, to the appropriate national and, where appropriate, international, standard of completion, by the age of 15 	100% of boys and girls within xx years
2. Post-basic education expanded strategically to meet needs for knowledge and skills related to employment and livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of students of senior secondary/TVET/tertiary age (15-25) who complete an accredited qualification 	X% of boys and girls within xx years, depending on country starting point
3. Reduce and seek to eliminate differences in educational outcomes among learners associated with household wealth, gender, special needs, location, age and social group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of children from the bottom 20% of household income achieving x% in national learning assessments (NLAs) compared to those from the top 20% • Comparative achievement of boys compared to girls in NLAs • Comparative achievement of those with special needs in NLAs • Comparative achievement of those in disadvantaged geographic locations in NLAs • Comparative achievement of those from marginalised social groups in NLAs 	X% of boys and girls within xx years

Cross-cutting themes	
Education in Emergencies	Conflict and disaster risk reduction integrated into all national education sector plans
Migration	All migrants of school-age or who are education professionals recorded in monitoring of education goals by the host country to inform policy formulation
Gender	All reporting and evaluation of the development goals disaggregated by sex and analysed through a gender lens
Education for Sustainable Development	Education for sustainable development mainstreamed in all education policies, teacher and school leader preparation, and curricula

Subordinate goals	Goal	Illustrative Indicators
i. Early childhood education and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce and seek to eliminate early childhood under-nutrition and avoidable childhood disease, and universalise access to community based ECE/D and pre-school below age 6 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic health and child development Body Mass Index, immunisation rates, childhood diseases Participation rates in organised ECE/D and pre-school by age
ii. Basic education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universalise an 'expanded vision of access' to a full cycle of a minimum of 9 years of continuous basic education Successful achievement of national learning outcomes in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains for both primary and lower secondary cycles at age appropriate levels up to the age of 15 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment at Grades 1-12 Completion rate by age at Grades 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12 Trained and qualified teacher rate Trained and qualified school leader rate National Learning Assessment standards at Grade 3, 6, 9 and 12 Yield (level of achievement * % of age group achieving level)
iii. Post-basic and post-secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest strategically in expanded and equitable access to post-basic and tertiary level education and training linked to wellbeing, livelihoods and employment and the transition to responsible adult citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolments by grade at secondary level % of age group enrolled by Grade Transition rates Completion rates <p>All disaggregated by wealth quintile, location, gender, age and social group</p>
iv. Non-formal education and lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate illiteracy and innumeracy amongst those under 50 years old Provide education opportunities for young people and adults who have not successfully completed 9 years of basic education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy and numeracy rates at ages 15-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45 and 46-50 using samples and graded tests Trained and qualified non-formal education facilitators
v. Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce and seek to eliminate disparities in participation in education at school level linked to wealth, location, special needs, age, gender and social group and ensure all children have equal educational opportunities and reduce gaps in measured outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation rates by Grades 1, 6, 9, and 12 by wealth quintile, location, gender, special needs, age and social group Distribution of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pupil-teacher ratios and class size distance to school achievement levels
vi. Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate infrastructure for learning according to national norms for buildings, basic services, safety, learning materials, and learning infrastructure within appropriate distances of households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of schools meeting standards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sanitation furniture and equipment learning materials electricity recreation facilities clean water security access to relevant technologies building quality/learning space/safety

Appendix 6: List of participants

Technical Meeting on Advocacy Strategy Development, 18-19 September 2013 - PARTICIPANT LIST			
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