

# **THE CARIBBEAN SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY:**

## **IT'S IMPLICATION FOR TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE CARIBBEAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Madam President and teacher colleagues, you have bestowed on me the great honour and distinction of giving the prestigious John Cumberbatch Memorial Lecture on its tenth anniversary. You have combined this great privilege with the very challenging task of speaking on a contemporary topic that is exercising the minds of all who think of the future of our profession and the Caribbean region. My prayer is that of the little boy who fell in a barrel of molasses: Oh God give my tongue strength for this task.

If a narrow lens is employed to explore this topic of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, CSME, its implication for teacher education and training in the Caribbean then we would immediately go to issues such as common Caribbean standards for teacher education, upgrading the level of credentials of teacher education programmes, accreditation, new modalities for in-service professional development, the application of information and communication technologies in teacher education and training and the regional representation of teachers rights and benefits. However, a broader lens is required if we are to put these issues specific to the teaching profession in appropriate context and if we are to loosely sketch the general contours of the content that teacher education and training in the Caribbean must cover.

Allow me therefore to speak briefly, but hopefully insightfully about the teaching occupation and its mission within society, why CSME, and the Caribbean as both a place and a people, before addressing the specify issues identified above.

## **THE TEACHING OCCUPATION AND ITS MISSION IN SOCIETY**

A popular notion of schooling and teaching is that they are about the transmission of the past. While all schooling and teaching will of necessity connect with and transmit some of the past, this is not the major mission of schooling and teaching. Schooling and teaching are the principal means by which a people construct their future as a distinct society. Accordingly, teaching is a prophetic vocation. The mission of the teacher is intricately bound out with the vision of the set of ideals of human personality and human society that a people are seeking to embrace, the values that they choose to adhere to with respect to the worth they ascribe to particular attributes and behaviours and the virtue that is demanded if this vision and those values are to be successfully conveyed. As such teachers are required to be exemplars of the vision and the values that a people embrace and are therefore held to a higher moral standard than the rest of society as the lead in the process of transformation.

Essentially therefore teaching and schooling are about mobilisation of individuals from disparate and diverse backgrounds of race, class, colour, creed, residence, religion, political persuasions etc to form common identifies, to see themselves as sharing the same destiny and of developing bonds of solidarity. The perspective of teachers is fundamentally different from that of the politician. The latter are focused on four or five year policy cycles. Teachers are focused on change across generations.

Teacher education and training has the responsibility of continuously preparing teachers to understand their mission in their society, develop the competencies to execute that mission, master the behaviours consistent with the vision and the values being conveyed and develop the confidence needed to undertake the task. In a real sense teacher education and training needs to be in the vanguard of the process by which a society constructs its future.

### **WHY CSME?**

If teacher education and training in the Caribbean is to include CSME within its mandate and mission then the first question that needs to be asked and answered is why CSME? The Right Honourable Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados in the

Thirteen Anniversary Lecture of the Caribbean Community in April 2004 at Frank Collymore Hall declared that CSME is unquestionably the most complex, most ambitious and most difficult enterprise ever contemplated in the region. He further stated that all productive sectors of Caribbean countries have been structurally and functionally integrated into metropolitan economies and therefore highly dependent on these economies. CSME offers the region the prospect of greater self-reliance, internal economic stability and therefore increased capacity to absorb external economic shock and survive. Ann-Margaret Lim of Jamaica says that CSME is a protective hedge against the full force of global market winds.

The Grand Anse Declaration of 1989, in rather bland language, cites the rationale of CSME as:

- Deepening economic integration by advancing from a common market to a single market and economy
- Widening membership thereby expanding the economic mass of the Caribbean Community
- Progressive insertion of the region into the global trading and economic systems.

However, there is a dimension related to the necessity for CSME that I would like to highlight. I believe that it is the most important and crucial factor that needs to be grasped in order to better appreciate the need for CSME.

The dimension is best uncovered and revealed by taking a closer look at which Caribbean territories are absent from the CSME. Among those absent are the British Dependencies of Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands which by language, culture and colonial history and heritage are in most other circumstances included in the Caribbean tent. They virtually exclude themselves because they are still part of Britain. The same is true of Martinique, Guadeloupe and St Martin which are Departments of France; Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St Marteen, and Saba which are Dependencies of Holland;

and Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands which are part of the United States. Yet all of these countries in the broadest sense are part of the Caribbean. The criterion that dictates their exclusion from the CSME is their continued connection to powerful countries outside of the Caribbean. This is in contrast to the politically independent countries which are not guaranteed any such protection from those countries.

Yet not all politically independent countries in the Caribbean are part of CSME. The Dominican Republic is part of the Central American Free Trade Agreement although it is located south of the Bahamas and Jamaica and north of Antigua and Barbuda. Indeed, for reasons of language, culture and colonial history in most fora the Dominican Republic is grouped and linked with Latin America. While Cuba is virtually isolated from economic alliances, their socio-cultural linkages are also with Latin America. This is in contrast to Belize which is located on mainland Central America but shares more cultural heritage with the Caribbean than neighbouring Guatemala and Mexico and Guyana and Surinam which are in South America but are not part of Latin America.

In essence the candidate countries of the CSME are the twelve independent English-speaking Caribbean countries and Surinam and Haiti. Put another way, these are the fourteen politically independent countries of the Caribbean that are on their own in the world. Political independence freed them from colonial dominated but severed their protection by powerful countries of the world. Further, geographical location, culture and colonial history have excluded them from being part of any powerful or potentially powerful continent bloc of countries. As such these countries are caught in the intersection of the exercise of power in the world.

Powerful countries will on various issues required these fourteen countries to make choices that are related to their contests and conflicts. These choices will almost certainly trigger retaliatory consequences from the powers that have been offended by the choices made. If we are to learn from the history of civilisation all small vulnerable kingdom, cities, states, countries and peoples located between large powerful kingdoms, cities, states and countries have invariably been battered and beaten up based on so-called wrong choices that only hindsight makes clear.

Allow me to illustrate the point being made another way. The world is not only globalising it is regionalising at the same time. In this Western Hemisphere there is North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. North America is a continent, which geographically includes Mexico. However, by language, culture and colonial history Mexico is in Latin American. If Mexicans began to forget this by being members of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, the 700 mile fence now to be built on their border with the United States should cure any forgetfulness. However, North America and Latin America are defined; the fact is the Caribbean is not a part of either. The Caribbean as it were an addendum in the Western Hemisphere. The Caribbean is added on after either North America or Latin America. In this Hemisphere the Caribbean is a distinct but small and vulnerable region that is caught in the intersection of the exercise of power within the Hemisphere. We are almost inconsequential in the political economy of the rest of the world.

The fact that the Caribbean has recognition in the world has nothing to do with our sizes of our countries or population, military might or economic clout. In fact the recognition the Caribbean has in the world is far beyond its political, economic or military importance. Rather, it has to do with the talent and abilities of our people demonstrated in widely different arenas of human engagement and which by any standard is accepted as world class.

In my thirty odd years experience in international matters and arrangements, in most instances when the Caribbean is defined for some activity it is the fourteen countries of CSME that end up in the same room. The political economy of the current world order and the socio-cultural realities of this Hemisphere have conspired to carved out, imposed and prescribed the same space and destiny for these fourteen countries. CSME is just one of the devices by which we must begin to contend with this destiny.

The rationale for CSME resides in the logic that adaptive advantage resides in unity among these small vulnerable countries in the Caribbean. Unity has a high survival coefficient than bilateral exposure to the economic shocks and political threats that are almost certain to come to each of these countries from the countries holding power in the world. However, this unity will only increase the chances of survival it will not eliminate the shocks and threats.

The vision and perspicacity of our current political leaders in formulating and agreeing to CSME is countervailed by the political arrangements put in place to implement it. The fourteen sovereign states will have exclusive powers in relation to the implementation of community decisions. Prime Minister Arthur stated in 2004 that the most difficult political form has been chosen to implement CSME. Frankly, the political arrangements put in place to implement CSME are as close as one could come to a recipe for failure. Further, given the fate of the Federation and the inaction of political leaders to implement the common external tariff there is no reason to be sanguine about either the pace or the fate of CSME if left as a matter confined to the political arena.

It must be remembered that the reason that the Caribbean is divided into Dutch-speaking, English-speaking, French-speaking and Spanish speaking countries has nothing to do with the Caribbean. These divisions are the legacy of past super-power conflicts and contests played out in Caribbean waters and on Caribbean shores. If the Caribbean is to have a future different from its past as present and coming super-power conflicts and contest are played out in the region then the countries so exposed need to unite in order to have a fighting chance to determine the future in their own terms.

Turning to the context of CSME itself, to put it in the mildest and most understated terms, historically markets and economies have not been fair and kind to the majority of Caribbean people. Almost all market and economic arrangements in our history have benefited a minority of the people but have created inequities that in some cases are absolutely scandalous. Markets have never been neutral to the majority of the people of the Caribbean. When it comes to economies, it is always a vexed question of whose economy is being spoken about.

For these reasons it is understandable why some may argue that educators should leave CSME to the politician and business people until they can be assured that it is not just talk and legal paper or business as usual. Why should the energies of teachers be expended in areas that has historically benefited only selected groups and where the political arrangements lack courage and conviction?

In my view this would be a huge mistake because history would have blinded us from seeing the absolutely crucial steps that must be taken to cope with what is upon us presently as a region and what awaits us in the future. The bottom-line is that the mentality needed to make CSME work is also critical and absolutely essential to the ways in which the peoples of these fourteen countries have to understand themselves in the global community, devise means to cope with the exercise of power in the world, create their own opportunities, take advantage to opportunities available globally and cope with the adversity that is sure to come.

There is at least one thing of which the fourteen politically independent countries of the Caribbean that are not part of Latin America can be sure of for the future. They are going to be beaten, battered and severely bruised by being caught in the middle of power contests and conflicts within the Western Hemisphere and in within the wider world. The economic, social, political and cultural consequences of the decimation that will result be much greater if they are divided. However, difficult it may be Caribbean unity increases the chances and will mitigate some of the negative consequences that will come from power conflicts within the Hemisphere and the world.

The clear implication therefore is that the education and training of present and future teachers in the Caribbean must be so structured and organised that teachers become principal agents in constructing Caribbean unity. CSME is but one of the foundation stones in that construction.

Just in case anyone would underestimate what is involved in building Caribbean unity among the fourteen countries let me spell it out in nationalist terms. It is that of mobilising Antiguans and Barbudans, Bahamians, Belizeans, Barbadians, Dominicans, Grenadians, Guyanese, Haitians, Kittians and Nevisans, Jamaicans, St Lucians, Surinamese, Vincentians, Trinidadians and Tobagians to share a common Caribbean identity, accept a shared destiny in the world and develop such bonds of solidarity and belonging that supercede their national conception of themselves so that by 2030 there will be free movement of goods, services, capital and people throughout the region begins to become a reality. Put another way, if CSME is going to be a reality and not just another agreement on paper by Heads of Government that

is frustrated in meaningful realisation, present and future teachers in the Caribbean have huge role to play and teacher education and training must take on this role as a matter of priority understanding that their larger objective is constructing Caribbean unity which is a necessary condition for the future survival and advancement of this region.

## **THE CARIBBEAN AS A PLACE AND PEOPLE**

CSME is focused on the Caribbean as a place. Teacher education and training must always understand the Caribbean as both a place and a people. There are several reasons which this conceptualisation is of vital importance.

- The development of a Caribbean identity, sense of shared destiny and bonds of solidarity appears to be much more developed and advanced in Toronto, London, New York and Miami and in several parts of the Caribbean itself. In conversing with and confronting the world outside these Barbadians, Jamaicans, Kittians Guyanese, Trinidadians, Belizeans etc of different races, classes and genders have come to an understanding of themselves as coming from a distinct society and having shared meanings and understanding beyond that of nationality. Given the constant movement of Caribbean people between the metropolitan countries and the Caribbean it is very likely that those returning to reside in the region could become some of the most reliable and effective champions of Caribbean unity of the development of the mentality needed to achieve that unity.
- These communities of Caribbean people living outside the region are as important to the region as those of us living in the region. The involvement of persons of Caribbean heritage in the political life of the powerful countries in which they are located could be a very significant asset in dealing with actions taken by those countries which adversely affects the region. To date this is a very under-developed resource.
- There are several misperceptions and attitudes existing between Caribbean people in the region and outside that need to be addressed. For example, in Jamaica those coming back home after success in the metropolitan countries



are officially recognised as “Returning Residents”. However, those coming home by escort by metropolitan authorities are called “Deportees.” Similarly Jamaican abroad are constantly expressing alarm at the murder rate in Jamaica without taking account of the fact that a number of the over 20,000 children who were deported from the metropolitan countries over the last ten years have been committed murder in Jamaica.

- Just as all the productive sectors in the Caribbean have been integrated into metropolitan economies so has Caribbean education being linked into the international labour markets. Caribbean education has always produced more talent than Caribbean economies can absorb and this will continue even with CSME. It is this aspect of Caribbean education that has helped to create the large communities of Caribbean nationals living all over the world. However, one of the criticisms that can be level at the nationalist era is that education created nationals who felt let down when job opportunities available at home were either not found or found to be inadequate and who when they found suitable opportunity abroad were not initially appreciative of the quality of the preparation that their countries had given them to compete internationally. In the knowledge economies of the twenty-first century there will be even great demand and opportunity for talent thus providing even greater opportunities for the products of Caribbean education. Teacher education and training must therefore prepare teachers capable of helping Caribbean people to access opportunity both inside and outside of the Caribbean.
- Remittances from Caribbean nationals, who have move in the global labour market notwithstanding immigration barriers of the metropolitan countries, now rival traditional products as sugar and bananas as well as tourism as a mainstay of the economies of most countries of the Caribbean. Caribbean nationals living abroad have almost provided the circumstances in which many non-traditional exports from the Caribbean have gotten a foothold in overseas markets. However, it is mainly tourism interests and financial institutions that have developed goods and services that tap into the needs of these Caribbean people. The current nationalist focus of Caribbean education and education for a place has in fact developed little to address the needs of these successful school leavers and graduates, and the needs of their children, now that they are

located outside of the region. This deficit cannot be carried forward in the twenty-first century.

I trust that these examples are sufficient to sustain the view that the Caribbean must be conceptualised as both people and place and that the xenophobia potential of nationalism must not be carried over into this era which needs to focus on regionalism. However, there are several aspects of the Caribbean as place that must be addressed. If people of all social segments of each country are to unite to survive external economic and political threats, then there are several axes of internal division as well as many legacies of the colonial past that must be confronted and constructively dealt with. My addresses these axes or division and inequities, there is likelihood that the future results of CSME will be more widely and equitable spread.

While there are degrees of differences among the several countries, so what I am about to say applies more or less in different countries, the fact is that in our period of independence in many ways it has been independence colonial style. By that I mean that in many respects we have changed the players and not the play, the actors and not the script, and this has made matters worse in several instances because we have simply expanded the problems without resolving them.

Again allow me four examples of defining Caribbean contradictions to illustrate the point.

1. Migrant mainstems. The majority of the population of Caribbean countries, and the mainstems of these societies, are groups whose ancestors arrived in the region less than five hundred years ago. While this feature is shared with the rest of the Hemisphere it is very pronounced in the region. The legacy of this is a sense of belonging elsewhere and consequently divided loyalty which often is attended by a lack of confidence in ourselves and judging things and people from elsewhere as superior. In this regard I would have to say that Barbados is somewhat of an exception. In my frequent goings and comings over the last three years among the things I have come admire is Barbadian

pride and confidence in things Barbadian. Indeed in a discussion in Trinidad a few weeks ago I had to remark that Jamaicans and Trinidadians seem to tear down our countries in inverse degree to which Barbadians are proud of Barbados. Notwithstanding local exception this tendency to downgrade our institutions, accomplishments and people is an obstacle to our development.

2. Dominant minorities and marginal majorities. In most other countries it is the other way around. Dominant groups are nested within majority groups and it is minorities that are marginalised. It is true that these represent countervailing powers in that the dominance has to be exercised taking into account the power of numbers. Translated into current realities this means that while economic power resides with minority groups political power rests with the marginalised majority. The fact is, however, that the business of politics and the politics of business invariably renders manifestos of governing parties meaningless. As this repeats itself despite cycle of changes of governing parties some of the frustrated majority, often young men, turn to violence which has been the traditional Caribbean response to hopelessness and alienation. It is time to resolve this contradiction and these repeated cycles of promise and rebellion.
3. Modern societies of modest means. There can be no question Caribbean societies are modern and match the so-called developed world in many aspects. I need to go no further than to point to the fact that on the UN Development Index measuring basic human needs Barbados ranks ahead of several western industrialised countries. There can also be no question that most Caribbean countries are living above their means. We are spending more than we are earning. The result is mounting debt and no political party holding office or seeking power seems able to bell this cat. But it is my ten year old daughter that has given me hope that all is not lost. She received some cash as a birthday present and proudly stated that for the first time she was going to use her own money to purchase lunch. She asked me for a lift to Kentucky and placed her order. As we were inching up in the Drive Through she looked at the money and said: "Daddy, imagine we are going to exchange paper for

food.” As a teacher parent I jumped at the opportunity to take her through the ancient system of barter, the substitution of gold and silver as basis of exchange, the introduction of paper backed by gold but I had to include the printing of paper money not backed by gold. Having listened carefully she said “Daddy, that why I do not want to grow up.” Clearly she understands the disaster that could be awaiting her generation. Giving value for money, fiscal responsibility and making provision for the “rainy day” are habits that need to be promoted at the individual, institutional and national levels within Caribbean countries and must be on the agenda for societal change.

4. Creative folk and conforming intelligencia. Almost everything that defines the Caribbean in terms of food, music, language, dance, among other things have been the creations of its folk. Further, the most creative and divergent postures in thought have come from among the lesser schooled sections of the society. Conversely, that the most conforming ways of thought have come from the highly schooled segments of the society whether we are looking at the truisms of Western Enlightenment or resisting forms of the affirmation of the West such as Marxism and Post-modernism. The culture and knowledge of the folk within the Caribbean have been at loggerheads with schooled scholarship. At the same time it is the culture and knowledge of the folk, the less schooled that has defined the Caribbean. The stereotypes of the Black Englishman and ragamuffin confront each other daily on the campuses of all educational institutions. The best that has been done is to restrict the former to the classroom and allow the latter some space in the form of cultural items of on public occasions. While the introduction of the concept of the Ideal Caribbean person is a step in the right direction, it is access to meaningful prospects of upward social mobility that is likely to be most effective in bringing about the desired resolution to this bipolar characteristic of Caribbean society.

Mr Chairman and colleagues I hope that I have been able to show that teacher education and training in the Caribbean needs to take up the challenge of making CSME happen principally because CSME requires the same mentality as is necessary for the survival and progress of the Caribbean and its people in the twenty-first century. CSME is but one of a constellation of strategies that Caribbean societies and

people must employ in coping with our position within the global political economy and Hemispheric regional socio-cultural realities. What is involved will take generations to succeed and therefore requires institutionalisation within the education system beginning with teacher education and training.

In nutshell the essence of my argument is that if teacher and education and training produces teachers who understand and effectively take on the mission to construct a Caribbean mentality which has as its main elements common identity, share destiny and bonds of solidarity, then when the economic shocks and political threats from the powerful countries come they are likely to result in pressure on the politicians to make more appropriate and courageous arrangements and also prompt those who influence markets and economies to ensure greater equity and greater protection of the most vulnerable in the societies. In other words will we cannot clearly forecast the specific events and circumstances, we can adopt the strategies that will increase the survival possibilities of the Caribbean while utilising tools such as CSME. The task of teachers therefore is to begin to mobilise ordinary Caribbean people to become involved in the extraordinary issues of our times.

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

It would be reasonable to conclude from the foregoing discussion that the implications of CSME to teacher education and training in the Caribbean are not only specific to the free movement of goods, services, capital and people but also generic which respect to what is required of teacher education and training in the Caribbean in the twenty-first century. Allow me therefore to set out a vision and propose a framework for teacher education and training in the Caribbean. Until I retired from UWI, Mona recently it was my good fortune and enormous privilege to have worked as the Professor of Teacher Education for 26 years. What I am proposing is a compilation of what I have seen some governments do that in my view is worthy of all governments to consider, some things that I have worked to make happen and others that upon reflection seem to be critically necessary for the future.

New thinking is needed in several areas including altering the parameters within which national colleges and universities organise themselves to offer teachers

education programmes. The move to greater regional collaboration needs to begin with the transformation of national institutions.

At the same time care must be taken to build on successful practices and paradigms that have been developed in the region. In this regard the most successful institutions that have been designed and developed to permit regional cooperation and unity have been West Indies cricket, the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Examinations Council. The major feature of each of these is allowing these institutions to operate by finding the best talent needed for their mission without regard to nationality.

### **Responsibility for Teacher Education**

The responsibility for the initial training of teachers for early childhood, primary, special education and secondary education should be the responsibility of national colleges and universities. Governments should allow their national colleges and universities offering teacher education programmes not only to supply national needs but also to meet regional and international demand for teachers. Accordingly, each national institution should be discouraged from attempting to offer all teacher education programmes but to specialise in those programmes that it can produce a high standard. Further, Governments should set up a clearing house that allows nationals of one country to be trained in the national institutions of other countries. This clearinghouse would accept payments of economic costs from the sending governments and make payments to the receiving training institutions in the various countries. The Caribbean has been training teachers for over 170 years. Caribbean teachers have received international recognition for their competence and are sought after. There are large numbers of Caribbean youths and others that can be trained as teachers. There is a worldwide shortage of teachers and it is expected to become even more severe. Caribbean governments should assist their national institutions to make use of this opportunity and cooperate among themselves in the process. Movement of students between countries is not only part of CSME it is an essential part of teaching the teachers what is involved.

Further national colleges and universities training teachers should be allowed to be entrepreneurial especially where overseas agencies are willing to pay for their services and where local agencies and individuals are willing to do the same. The old national arrangements for teacher education in the region need to be urgently reviewed and radically changed.

### **Caribbean Standards for Teacher Education**

Although national colleges and universities should have the mandate and the mission to train teachers for all levels of the education system, these programmes offered nationally should meet Common Caribbean Standards not only with respect to entry requirements and exist competencies but curriculum content in order to ensure that these programmes not only prepare teachers who can competently teacher English, Mathematics and all other subjects but understands, accept and are competent to address the issues of the discussed earlier in this Lecture.

Common standards are also essential if when students move from one institution to the next they are able to receive credits for work done in other institutions. Common standards also facilitate the articulation of studies undertaken in education to be articulated with studies in other areas of academic pursuit.

### **Credentials for Teachers**

The teacher education programmes in all national institutions should be at the Bachelor degree level. It is time to upgrade the level of the certification of initial teacher education programmes in the region from the Certificate and Diploma level, which was established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the degree level. The Bahamas began to implement such a policy in 1999 and this policy is worthy of emulation by the rest of the region. All teachers graduating from the College of the Bahamas since then have been awarded B Ed degrees. Jamaica has embarked on a similar policy but has focused on upgrading teachers holding Certificates and Diplomas in order not to put experience teachers at a disadvantage to their younger colleagues.

The importance of this policy resides in the fact that the education of the teacher is not only related to their competence to do the job but also to public confidence in them. The certificate and diploma was the standard when the majority of the population only completed primary education and only a small proportion when to secondary school. This standard is no longer appropriate given the fact that most countries in the Caribbean now offer universal secondary education and increasing numbers hold degrees. Further, the overseas recruitment of teachers targets trained graduates hence if schools in the region are not to be short changed a constant supply of trained graduates needs to be ensured.

An important point to bear in mind is that such degree programmes must satisfy the international accepted standard of 16 years of education starting from age 6 years. Put another way minimum entry requirements to such programmes ought not to be CSEC but CAPE Year 1. The Bahamas added Grade 12 to their secondary education programme in order to comply with this requirement. To vary from this standard runs the risk of compromising the international currency of the teacher education programme involved.

### **Regional Teacher Education Accreditation Authority**

Currently degree programmes in education are not subject to any quality process of quality assurance outside of those that are internal to the institutions themselves. The quality assurance mechanisms in place through the UWI Joint Boards of Teacher Education of Cave Hill and Mona and the Boards of Teacher Training of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana operate at the Certificate and Diploma levels. UWI, through the Vice Chancellor, has proposed to the CARICOM Secretariat that a Teacher Education Accreditation Authority should be established under the CARICOM Accreditation Agency that would perform the quality assurance role at the degree level in teacher education. This is currently being studied by a Technical Committee; however, the entire teaching profession should urge the establishment of this body.



## **The Schools of Education at UWI**

The Schools of Education of UWI should divest themselves of programmes at the Bachelor degree level and reorganise themselves at the Graduate Schools of Education offering Master and Doctoral programmes through both the face-to-face and on-line modalities. The mission of these schools should be to produce the higher manpower needs of the education sector in the region including the teacher educators for national colleges and universities, national administrators, curriculum developers, planners, specialists in evaluation and measurement, economists of education and others.

## **Regional Mechanism for the Registration of Tertiary Institutions**

A colleague of mind told me that an important visitor to the region knowledgeable about regulations of tertiary institutions and trade in education services remarked that in this area the Caribbean is back to the days of the pirates and buccaneers. Mr Ed Brandon here at UWI Cave Hill has been keeping track of overseas universities operation in the Caribbean and if my memory serves me right the last number it saw was in excess of 150. However, there is no mechanism to regulate their operations. It would be wrong to classify all in the same boat. For example, St Georges University in Grenada cannot be styled as an offshore university. St Georges University has certainly come onshore. However, from what I have heard the content and quality of some programmes are in question. Yet Caribbean people are paying big bucks for some programmes. Further, not all Ministries have the capacity to assess either programmes or monitor operations. This certainly is an area for regional cooperation through the establishment of some mechanism that can address the matter.

## **New Modalities for In-Service Training**

New modalities need to be developed in the in-service training of teachers designed to bring about improvement in schools. One such modality is that of the Professional Development Cluster developed by the Joint Board of Teacher Education Mona as used in the Reform of Secondary Education Project in Jamaica and the Caribbean Centre of Excellence for Teacher Training, CETT. The concept of the Professional

Development Cluster, is to create a network of collaboration whereby the policy implementation capacity of the state, through a district or regional office of the Ministry of Education, the teacher education expertise of a college training teachers, the service research capabilities of a university and the resources of agencies and organisations supporting the work of the schools can be integrated so that they can constructively assist a group of schools to attain the desired high student outcomes.

The essence of the idea of the professional development cluster is:

- For the teachers and principal in each school to determine what needs to be done to achieve high student outcomes in the classes at that school.
- For the teachers and principals in the schools in the cluster to work together collaboratively and cooperatively in sharing experiences, forming collegial relationships and in building knowledge with respect to successful practice in that community.
- For the implementation and supervisory capacity of the Ministry of Education at the Regional or District level, the teacher education expertise of colleges training teachers in the District, the service research capabilities of the University and resources of organisations providing support can be marshalled to support the implementation of the teacher determined interventions.
- For these cooperative, collaborative and collective efforts to be consistently applied through repeated cycles of application of appropriate actions until the desired high student outcomes are achieved.
- For experiences gained by the constructive engagement of each of the partners to be fed back into their own operations. Hence, Ministry policies will be refined or reformulated. Teacher training at the colleges will be modified or strengthened. The research tools and knowledge base at the University will be enhanced, enriched and extended. The policies and practices used by organisations supporting the provision of resources to schools will be refined or reformulated.

## **ICT in Teacher Education**

The revolution in information and communication technologies, ICT, now offers to the Caribbean vast possibilities in linking principals, teachers and students in ways that would not have been though possible ten years ago. For the first time the Caribbean has an affordable means that can help to overcome some of the limitations imposed by the separation of our land masses by so much sea. In the time available probably the best way to address this matter is to speak briefly about some of the work that I have been engaged with over the last five years with the Joint Board, Mona and the Caribbean CETT. By the end of this year all twelve colleges training teachers in Jamaica will be linked by a Wireless high speed WAN such that students in one college could take courses in another college without leaving that college. By a similar infrastructure linking six project schools in Belize to the University of Belize, 10 project schools in Grenada to the T. A. Marryshore College and 10 project schools in Kingston to the Mico and St Josephs colleges it is now possible to teachers in these twenty six schools and four colleges not only see each other but to share experience and expertise in the successes they have had in teaching children to read and write in Grades 1 to 3.

Through the Joint Board's Multimedia Hub it is possible to organise video conferences between teacher educators in twelve colleges across the region, loop videos of exemplary teacher episodes of Caribbean teachers through IPTV over the Internet so that other teachers can view those episodes at their convenience and web-cast events taking place in one institution to be viewed in other institutions. With the coming on stream of the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network, CKLN and pioneering work done through the Joint Board and the Caribbean CETT a whole new era could be opened up in teacher education and training across the Caribbean.

If the people of the Caribbean are to move freely across the region to access opportunities, create value, design and deliver services and create knowledge meeting in virtual space is a good point to begin the introductions. One of the fascinating prospects of ICT and CSME is that persons may not have to leave home to do the job, deliver the service or receive the training from elsewhere in the region.

## **Regional Representation of Teachers' Rights and Benefits**

CSME as it relates to the free movement of teaching within the region and the trading of education services through the World Trade Organisation could fundamentally change the representation of teachers' rights and benefits in the Caribbean. The issues related to the appointment of teachers, conditions of service, compensation, pension and social security will require new arrangements within the region. This will not come about without friction with governments and without unions. Hopefully fracture can be avoided. Much of what is done to transform the current arrangements will come from constructive action to resolve the issues that will arise.

Allow me to day dream publicly for a moment. The day is May 28, 2020. All teachers in the Caribbean including those employed in universities, secondary schools, primary schools and schools serving children with special needs are members of a single teachers' union, the Caribbean Union of Teachers. This is the day on which all members of the union will be voting to elect the President for the next three years. The candidates have elected through a system of primaries conducted across the region. The major issue for that election is that of different proposals and schemes to ensure the portability of teachers' pension as they move from one country to the next. I beg your pardon but my dream is disturbed because this Lecture must be brought to conclusion. Accordingly, I cannot tell you who the candidates are however, and the level of the education system from which they have come, one thing is sure no president can be elected without securing a significant number of votes from the primary teachers across the region.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Mr Chairman, colleagues all I have tried in a very limited way to identify some of the critical issues and factors that are crucial to the survival and advancement of our region and people in the first half of the twenty-first century and the extent to which CSME and Teacher Education and Training need to impact each other to ensure the long-term success of CSME and the relevance of teacher education in addressing the imperatives that dictates Caribbean realities, the threats that must be confronted from

within and without and make the best use of the opportunities that will present themselves. One thing is sure hindsight will be much clearer than foresight. Hopefully, the general directions proposed will be found to have been correct.

I thank you.

**Professor Emeritus the Honourable Errol Miller**

**October 25, 2006**

**Almond Bay Conference Centre**

**Christ Church ,**

**Barbados. W.I.**