

CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS

Background

Following recommendations by the Fourth Commonwealth Education Conference, held in Lagos, Nigeria, in February 1968, which were endorsed by the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in January 1969, the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee agreed that the fifth in the series of Commonwealth specialist education conferences should take for its theme Education in Rural Areas.

2. At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Ghana the conference took place at the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana, from 23 March to 2 April 1970.

3. Mr Harold Houghton, CBE, Deputy Education Adviser to the British Ministry of Overseas Development, was invited to serve as Chairman of the Planning Committee. Ill-health unfortunately prevented Mr Houghton from participating in the final stages of the work, and he was succeeded by Professor L.J. Lewis, Head of the Department of Education in Tropical Areas of the London University Institute of Education, who acted as Chairman of the Planning Committee, co-Chairman of the Conference, and also presented one of the lead papers. The Assistant Commonwealth Secretary-General, Dr H.W. Springer, CBE, acted as Secretary to the Committee. The Planning Committee comprised Mr W.L. Tsitsiwu (Ghana), Mr M.L. Obroi (India), Mr D.R. Davidson (Jamaica), Mr E.N. Gicuhi (Kenya), Mr Chang Min Kee (Malaysia), Mr J. Pirotta (Malta), Dr S.M. Ali (Pakistan), Mrs L.S. Dorset (Trinidad and Tobago) and Mr W.S. Mufana (Zambia). Mr L.C. Comber, Dr Edith Mercer, Mr M.J. Rolls and Miss H.M. Wallis (Britain), Mr E. Bortei-Doku (Ghana) and Miss J. Steckle (FAO) were co-opted on to the Committee during the course of its work: Mr M. Lubrano and Mr T.A. Khan replaced Mr Pirotta and Dr Ali as a result of staff changes in the High Commissions of Malta and Pakistan.

4. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, inviting Governments to participate in the Conference, wrote:

'The primary purpose of the conference is to provide an opportunity for those concerned with relating all forms of education and training to the process of development in predominantly agricultural communities in developing countries, to examine the problems, exchange ideas and experiences, and indicate possible lines along which Governments and other agencies might plan future policy. It is hoped to achieve this by considering:

- (1) the formal school, its organisation and curriculum, together with the training of teachers;
- (2) out of school education and training for young people;
- (3) the education of adults at all levels;
- (4) education and training for agricultural development.'

5. Each of the major themes was introduced to a plenary session of the conference by a distinguished authority who had been invited to prepare a lead paper. The themes were then discussed in detail by working groups which prepared reports for further discussion in plenary session. The five lead papers presented were:

- (1) The School and the Rural Environment:
Professor L.J. Lewis, Head of the Department of Education in Tropical Areas, London University Institute of Education.
- (2) Out-of-School Education and Training of Young People: Professor A. Callaway, Research Professor, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- (3) The Education of Adults at All Levels:
Shrimati Lakshmi N. Menon; ex-Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India.

- (4) Education and Training for Agricultural Development: Professor Fergus B. Wilson, Chief, Agricultural Education and Rural Youth Service, Rural Institutions Division, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome.
- (5) Swaneng Hill School, Botswana: Patrick Van Rensburg, Principal, Swaneng Hill School, Serowe, Botswana.

6. Commonwealth Governments and representative international organisations were invited to contribute supplementary papers on topics relevant to the theme of the conference. 38 such papers were submitted, while the Government of Britain, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and the Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg, also made available a range of published material; the Commonwealth Secretariat presented the report of the Commonwealth African Regional Youth Seminar, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 1969, 'Youth and Development in Africa'. A full annotated list of the conference documentation appears in Appendix A of this report.

Participation

7. The conference was attended by 85 delegates and observers representing 23 Commonwealth countries and dependent territories and 14 international organisations. Dr H.W. Springer, Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General, represented the Commonwealth Secretary-General at the conference. Visitors included representatives of a number of the Commonwealth High Commissions in Ghana. A list of all those attending the conference is given in Appendix B of this report.

Conference Programme

8. The conference was opened on behalf of the host Government by the Honourable Mr William Ofori Atta, Minister of Education, Ghana. A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr H.W. Springer.

9. Following the official opening of the conference a keynote address was delivered to a plenary session of the conference by Mr R.K.A. Gardiner, the distinguished Ghanaian Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Further plenary sessions followed, in the course of

which the lead papers listed in paragraph 5 were presented.

10. The delegates were then divided into four working groups, the programmes for which were so arranged as to allow all delegates who so wished to participate in some of the discussions of working groups other than that to which they were allocated. Outline agenda were presented for the general guidance of the groups.

11. Arrangements were made for delegates to visit Accra, the Volta dam at Akosombo, the Apeguso Settlement Scheme and the Somanya Mechanised Farm, as well as community development courses for women.

12. The closing of the conference was addressed by the Honourable Mr William Ofori Atta, Minister of Education.

13. In the course of the conference the Government of Ghana held an official dinner for all delegates, following which a cultural show of Ghanaian drumming and dancing was presented by the Arts Council of Ghana. At the end of the conference the Assistant Commonwealth Secretary-General held a reception for delegates and distinguished visitors.

Acknowledgements

14. The Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee wish to acknowledge their gratitude to all those who contributed to the conference, and especially to Professor Lewis who took over at short notice the Chairmanship of the Planning Committee and co-Chairmanship of the conference. The Committee are grateful for the hospitality extended by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Dr A.A. Kwabong, the Master of Commonwealth Hall, Dr Thompson, and members of their staffs, and wish to express their appreciation of the support given to the conference by the host Government and other Commonwealth Governments, by the authors of the many informative and stimulating papers, and by the delegates, whose enthusiasm and expertise ensured the exchange of much valuable experience and information.

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