

Foreword

'This Protocol aims to balance the rights of teachers to migrate internationally against the need to ... prevent the exploitation of scarce human resources of poor countries' (Pg. 7, Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol)

Achievement of a balance between competing principles, demands and policies is a task with which the Commonwealth Secretariat is very familiar. Balancing the concerns and demands of the diverse and complex membership represented across its 53 member countries in five continents is nothing less than 'business as usual'. When, therefore, Commonwealth Ministers of Education requested in the Teacher Recruitment Protocol adopted in 2004, a balancing of the rights of teachers to migrate internationally against the need to protect the integrity of national education systems and prevent the exploitation of recruited teachers, this was a task which the Commonwealth Secretariat undertook on behalf of its member countries with the experience of precedent, strengthened by full knowledge of its goals, objectives and aspirations.

In 2004, when Education Ministers in the 'Future Actions' of the Teacher Protocol requested that a Working Group be established to investigate systems and criteria for assessment of equivalencies of teacher qualifications and of professional registration status, the Secretariat identified the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to carry forward this work. The recommendations of their 8-country pilot study on Teacher Qualifications and Professional Recognition were accepted by the Working Group who urged them to expand their remit to embrace a Teacher Qualifications Comparability Study for the 53 member countries of the Commonwealth. The objective of this teacher qualifications study was to enhance recognition of teacher qualifications across borders and between the member countries of the Commonwealth.

In concert with teacher qualifications initiatives, the Commonwealth of Learning also embarked on establishing a Transnational Qualifications Framework and UNESCO has carried forward their own work on quality assurance in professional qualifications. We are also delighted to be influencing initiatives on harmonisation of teacher qualifications within regions of the Commonwealth such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

As part of these global initiatives to ensure that teachers with professional qualifications of a high standard are able to move more freely than ever before between Commonwealth countries and all countries of the world – without having their skills and qualifications "discounted" – the Commonwealth Secretariat is pleased to be contributing this study on the comparability of teacher qualifications across the Commonwealth. This is indeed a publication whose impact goes beyond its covers, in terms of what it seeks to assert, establish, achieve and...to balance.

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