

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Commonwealth education ministers to discuss post-COVID-19 recovery at Nairobi conference

Top policymakers are set to meet in Kenya for the 21st Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers to discuss pressing education challenges at a time the world is recovering from the negative impacts of the pandemic

LONDON / NAIROBI, Wednesday, 13 April 2022 - Fifty-four Education Ministers are among top policymakers expected to gather in Nairobi, Kenya, for the 21st Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) from 27 - 28 April 2022.

Hosted by the Government of Kenya in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Kenya's Ministry of Education, the high-level conference will take place under the theme, **'Rethinking Education for Innovation, Growth and Sustainability post-Covid-19'**.

Its main objective is to discuss key education priorities within the 54-member Commonwealth geared towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The conference will bring together ministers, senior government officials, educators, development partners, civil society, and policymakers to share knowledge and good practices in education as the world recovers from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants will also identify areas of action and explore innovative approaches that can be adapted by member countries to develop sustainable and resilient education systems.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC said:

"Over the last two years, we have seen COVID-19 rob people around the world of their loved ones, livelihoods and so many of the usual certainties and comforts of everyday life. Its impact on young people has been especially distressing with millions of students seeing their education disrupted - schools and universities were closed, and students were forced to learn from home as a result of lockdown measures, which have also further exacerbated existing inequalities, especially among girls and marginalised communities.

The pandemic has already taken so much from us. We must act now to prevent it from taking away the human right to education. The theme of the 21st CCEM is timely and reminds us that now more than ever, it is important that our Commonwealth family comes together to re-evaluate the status quo and work towards building a more prosperous and thriving Commonwealth for our young people. To this end, the Secretariat will continue working with member countries, stakeholders, and partners, as part of its commitment to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4 and strengthening education systems and policies across the Commonwealth.

I commend the people and government of Kenya for their commitment to delivering a successful CCEM in Nairobi."

Incoming Chair of the Education Ministerial Action Group (EMAG) and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Education, Professor George Magoha, on his part said:

“The COVID-19 pandemic brought education systems across the world to a near standstill. Low-income countries were especially hit hard. With the future of our children and young people on the line, we need to work together to build back better and refocus on investing in inclusive and equitable quality education.

We must build resilient education systems that can address emerging issues and withstand future crises as part of measures to minimise and protect learning from disruption.”

With only eight years left to meet the SDG 4 of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, a key objective of the conference will be to review and assess the progress towards achieving this goal, at regional and national levels.

The conference will also assess the existing commitments and outcomes from the 2018 CCEM in Fiji, and the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London, to leave no one behind, with an emphasis on equitable and inclusive education and supporting marginalised groups. Some of these groups include young girls, and those from disadvantaged communities who are targeted through appropriate policies, advocacy and strategic partnerships.

For the first time, proceedings of this year's conference will adopt a hybrid format with Ministers of Education invited to take part in the physical meeting in Nairobi, while those unable to travel to Kenya will participate virtually via an online platform. Outcomes on policy proposals from this meeting will inform discussions at the upcoming CHOGM expected to take place in June 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda.

For further information about the conference, please visit the official #21CCEM website at <https://21ccemkenya.go.ke/>.

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About The Commonwealth Secretariat:

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent and equal sovereign states. Our combined population is 2.5 billion, of which more than 60 per cent is aged 29 or under. The Commonwealth Secretariat supports member countries to build democratic and inclusive institutions, strengthen governance and promote justice and human rights. Our work helps to grow economies and boost trade, deliver national resilience, empower young people, and address threats such as climate change, debt, and inequality.

For more information about The Commonwealth, visit <https://thecommonwealth.org/>

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About the Conference:

Held every three years, the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) is the second-largest meeting organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat, after the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The Conference is open to Ministers of Education of all 54 Member States, as well as educators and teachers, development partners, civil society, and policymakers. The 21st CCEM will be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 27 - 28 April 2022 under the theme, '*Rethinking Education for Innovation, Growth and Sustainability post-Covid-19*'.

For further information about the Conference visit <https://21ccemkenya.go.ke/>

Resources:

- 21CCEM Event Page
- 21CCEM Official Website
- 21CCEM Concept Note
- 21CCEM Provisional Agenda
- 20CCEM Nadi Declaration
- Kenyatta Declaration - Heads of State Call to Action on Education Finance - July 2021