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Commonwealth education ministers vow to increase investment in education at Nairobi conference

29 April 2022, Nairobi - Education ministers at the 21st Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) in Nairobi, Kenya, have issued a joint statement in which they recognised the urgent need to increase investment in education and skills at all ages, with particular focus on ensuring foundational skills for all.

With Kenya hosting the Conference, Ministers also recognised the urgent issues raised in the *Kenyatta Call to Action on Education Finance in 2021* and agreed to look for suitable opportunities to consider the financing of education and welcomed initiatives that support the capacity building of ministries of education on financing of education.

Hosted by the Government of Kenya in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and Kenya's Ministry of Education, the two-day conference focused on the theme, **'Rethinking Education for Innovation, Growth and Sustainability post-Covid-19'** and accorded ministers, policymakers, civil society, and development partners the opportunity to share knowledge and good practice, and explore trends and innovative approaches that can be adapted by member countries to develop sustainable and resilient education systems.

With regard to charting the way forward in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, ministers committed to building resilient education systems that can withstand future threats and disruptions and sought to improve access to digital connectivity and skills to support teaching and learning. Ministers resolved to build back better and with resilience for fair, inclusive economic recovery, and a sustainable future in the Commonwealth.

Ministers also acknowledged the Commonwealth of Learning's focus on promoting learning for sustainable development through the use of technologies and noted the report and good work in support of distance education and learning, especially during COVID-19 pandemic.

In her concluding remarks, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt. Hon Patricia Scotland QC, said:

“Over the last two days, we have discussed important issues such as financing education, Covid-19 mitigation and recovery strategies, education and employability, redefining learning spaces and education for sustainability and peace. I gladly received your ministerial statement and look forward to working with Kenya to implement these new ideas and recommendations for the next three years.

Education, we know, lays the foundation for personal and social development, responsible action and good citizenship. It is a human right and the best guarantee against unemployment and poverty. But for our communities and societies to reap these benefits, we need high-quality and inclusive education systems throughout the Commonwealth.

Let us build, reinforce, and sustain our partnerships to deliver the targets and SDGs.”

Declaring the conference officially closed, the new Chairman of the Education Ministers Action Group (EMAG) and Kenya's Minister of Education, Hon. Prof. George Magoha, said:

“As was well elaborated during the proceedings of this meeting the benefits of education at the individual and economic levels are enormous and permeate all our lives. The Conference of Commonwealth of Education Ministers provides a platform for the members of this family to review our progress, build synergies and forge a common way forward towards improving education in our countries. It is, therefore, my earnest hope that our discussions in the last two days and the direction provided in the Declaration emanating from this meeting will accelerate momentum towards the achievement of the Education 2030 commitments.”

On the occasion, the Commonwealth Secretariat also launched an exciting children's book series on sustainable energy and the global transformation of energy systems. The books present the concepts of sustainable and inclusive energy in a digestible and engaging format for young readers, aged 7-12, to find out why they can be part of the change in the way the world produces and uses energy. These books are among publications, toolkits, manuals and other educational resources that the Secretariat provides free of charge to member states.

The [six finalists of the 2022 Commonwealth Education Awards](#) were also revealed at a virtual ceremony on the margins of the conference. The awards recognise and celebrate promising and innovative programmes, projects, and people that have made a positive impact on the education sector across the Commonwealth.

The meeting concluded with ministers expressing their sincere appreciation to the Government of Kenya for the effective chairmanship and excellent arrangements made for the 21st CCEM.

Policy proposals from the ministerial statement that was issued will inform discussions at the upcoming [Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting \(CHOGM\)](#), scheduled to take place in June 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda.

Over 200 international delegates from 40 Commonwealth countries, and over 200 participants from Kenya, attended the conference, which was convened in a hybrid format for the first time with some ministers and delegates attending the in-person event in Nairobi, while the rest joined virtually. The meeting also marked the first time the Commonwealth education family came together in Nairobi since 1987 when it hosted the 10th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers on the theme of 'vocational orientation of education'.

The next CCEM will take place in three years' time in 2025.

[Read the ministerial statement](#)

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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.

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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/>