Teachers for the future:  
Meeting teacher shortages to achieve Education for All

National Steering Group (NSG), Mauritius  
First Session, Le Mauricia Hotel, Grand Baie,  
11 October 2004

Summary Notes and Decisions

Opening
1. Welcoming remarks were made by the ILO education sector specialist on behalf of the Director of the ILO Office in Antananarivo. Introductions of participants were made (list attached).
2. The ILO education sector specialist presented the action programme background, including expected activities and outputs in South Africa, southern Africa and internationally.

Priority issues relating to teacher shortages and EFA in South Africa
3. Participants variously identified the following key issues which needed to be addressed within the action programme:
   - more emphasis on quality education within Mauritius education;
   - the quality and motivation of new entrants;
   - qualifications of teachers and their professional development, especially to meet new roles and responsibilities such as child-centred learning and to redress perceived deficiencies in recruitment cohorts from the 1990s;
   - more training and functioning hardware to extend use of information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching;
   - improved pedagogical training of secondary teachers;
   - numbers of contract teachers (especially ICT), and the situation of assistant teachers;
   - age and gender profile of the teaching profession, including continued feminisation, especially in primary schools;
   - out-migration of teachers from Mauritius;
   - financing, status and conditions of pre-primary teachers;
   - a more diversified teacher career structure;
   - remuneration levels and incentives, medical care and leave provisions;
   - strengthened means of information sharing and other forms of social dialogue between teachers’ unions and the Ministry of Education.
4. After some discussion on the ILO’s proposed conceptual framework, it was agreed that the framework for assessing issues and policy options encompassed almost all of the priorities raised by participants, and should be the basis for programme work within Mauritius, modified to make clear that the framework was also intended to cover early childhood development (ECD) or pre-primary
teachers. The ILO will circulate a new version to this effect, including the additional points requested by other NSGs in Lesotho and South Africa on the issue of cross-border mobility of teachers.

Plan of action and timeline for activities

5. Research and investigative work under the action programme would need to take account of the existing information base. Members of the NSG agreed to undertake an inventory of the available information in their respective departments or organisations within a matter of days, as the basis for deciding on gaps related to the various points of the framework and assessing what further work should be done at the next meeting of the NSG.

6. The Ministry of Education will confirm the availability of data needed under Chapter 1, except for the sixth point, as well as the available information under Chapter II.

7. The members of the NSG agreed to create a smaller technical committee (research team) composed of a representative each of the Ministry of Education, one or more of the teacher unions and possibly other members not present at the first meeting. Depending on the ability of the technical committee to investigate the identified gaps in information following the inventory to be established (points 5 and 6 above), and as necessary to complete a national synthesis report by June-July 2005 or before, a research/report coordinator with the necessary competencies in key areas to be covered by the framework would need to be engaged by the NSG. In the event that the necessary funding for such a report coordinator is not available within Mauritius, the ILO will favourably consider financial support within the limits of overall action programme funding. The necessity for, draft terms of reference and estimated costs of a coordinator should be decided at the next meeting.

8. It was agreed that the NSG would next meet at 10h00 on 21 October in the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, Phoenix to decide on the following:

- the extent of available information and identified gaps on the conceptual framework chapters;
- the nomination of a technical committee to do further work on the identified gaps and supervise production of the national report;
- consideration for the appointment of a report coordinator, terms of reference, timeline for producing a draft report and necessary financing for such a position.

9. The ILO will provide technical and logistical support to the work of the NSG in producing the country assessment (comments on the draft, including possible peer review from other experts), logistical and other support within its capacity (for NSG meetings, alternative funding if needed), and help with organisation of the sub-regional dialogue forum. Immediately after the NSG, the ILO will share with the Ministry of Education contacts within OECD countries carrying out their programme on recruiting, retaining and developing effective teachers. This programme also involves participation from the OECD Trade Union Advisory Committee (represented by Education International in almost all meetings).

Regional policy dialogue form

10. The NSG was informed that South Africa has agreed to host a planned sub-regional policy dialogue forum to share information, good practices and policy options among participating countries of southern and eastern Africa. The meeting is expected to include at least one Government, teacher union and employer representative (in the latter case from those national employers’ organisations participating in the action programme) from
participating countries: Lesotho; Mauritius; Namibia; South Africa; and most probably Zambia. Other southern African countries would be invited to the forum if interested (Botswana for example has already expressed an interest). The ILO plans to assist with logistics and financial support for the forum, subject to its financial capacity within the overall action programme.

11. Tentative dates for the forum are the second half of October-early November. The nature (technical workshop/seminar or policy conference at ministerial level) and expected outcomes remain to be decided.

NSG Chair and composition

12. The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research has accepted to convene, establish a draft agenda and chair future meetings until further notice or decision by the NSG. GTU/UPST and GSSTU will share Vice-Chair duties. The NSG is expected to be self-sustaining in terms of any costs for meetings and communications, and venues will be chosen with this criteria in mind.

13. Members agreed by consensus that, in addition to the core partners (including Ministry of Labour and the MEF, neither of which were able to send a representative to the first meeting), the following Government Ministries or other organisations would be invited to share information, experiences and participate in future meetings on a consultative basis as needed:

- Ministry of Civil Service
- Other teachers’ organisations, especially for private secondary schools
- Management of private schools
- Parent/Teachers’ Associations (PTAs)

Invitations will be issued by the Chair of the NSG (or Vice-Chair on request of the Chair) following consensus of the core partners.

Notes prepared and submitted by the ILO as initial convenor
Mauritius and Geneva, October 2004
List of Participants

Government

Mr. Dhurumbeer Kulpoo, Assistant Director, Research and Policy Analysis, Ministry of Education and Scientific Research

A representative of the Ministry of Labour was invited, but was unable to attend.

Teachers’ Organisations

Government Teachers’ Union (GTU)

Mr. Jugdish Lollbeeharry, President
Mr. Sheik Nashir Ramjan, General Secretary

Union of Primary School Teachers (UPST)

Mr. C. Kelly, President

Government Secondary School Teachers’ Union (GSSTU)

Mr. Soondress Sawmynader, President

Employers’ Organisations

A representative of the Mauritius Employers’ Federation (MEF) was invited, but was unable to attend

International Labour Office (ex-officio)

Mr. Bill Ratteree, Education Sector Specialist, ILO Geneva