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

National Steering Group, Trinidad and Tobago
First Session, Port of Spain, 13 December 2004

Summary Notes and Decisions

Opening
1. The representative of the Director of the ILO Sub-regional office for the Caribbean welcomed participants, with special thanks to the Project Manager and members of the Teachers Professional Development Unit for helping to organise the meeting. The formation of a national steering group to direct programme activities constituted an important first step in Trinidad and Tobago’s participation in the ILO initiative, which included a number of regional and international components. Introductions of participants were made (list attached).

2. The ILO education sector specialist from Geneva presented the action programme background, including expected activities and potential outputs in Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and internationally. In response to participants’ questions, it was indicated that: the conceptual framework proposed by the ILO, while intended to be comprehensive, could be revised and utilized as a function of identified national priorities; the programme was intended to cover pre-primary through secondary education, public and private, but not tertiary education except in relation to its impact on teacher education and training; and contacts had been initiated with some OECD countries which might contribute experiences from the recently concluded OECD project on attracting, retaining and developing effective teachers.

Priority issues relating to teacher shortages and EFA in Trinidad and Tobago
3. Participants identified the following key issues, which needed to be addressed within the action programme:
   - a range of issues many of which were the object of work by the Teacher Professional Development Unit, notably initial teacher education, continual professional development (CPD), potential changes in certification (licensing?), recruitment, induction, teacher monitoring and assessment, and self-regulation according to professional standards;
   - qualitative aspects and the changing profile of the teaching profession, especially needs for increasing specialization and professionalization as student learning needs developed in the perspective of lifelong learning and labour market needs;
   - improved pedagogical training, especially for a large percentage of secondary teachers;
   - shortages or mismatches between teacher qualifications and needs in certain subjects (for instance maths, special education or ICT), in rural areas and in Tobago;
   - remuneration levels, particularly for comparable entry-level occupations in Trinidad and elsewhere;
material but also non-material incentives to attract and retain teachers;
- retention of teachers after 50 and prior to the normal age of retirement;
- gender disequilibria within education, especially at management and responsibility levels, and in certain areas such as special education;
- roles and responsibilities of principals and school leadership.

4. It was agreed that the ILO’s proposed conceptual framework for assessing issues and policy options encompassed most if not all of these issues, and should be the basis for work within Trinidad and Tobago, subject to the following modifications:
   - Chapter I, student competences: add a new bullet point on new student competencies required in the future and their impact on teacher education and continual professional development, for instance, development of teamwork, critical thinking and self-learning capacities;
   - Chapter II, auxiliary teaching staff: as such staff did not exist in Trinidad and Tobago, replace this point of the analysis and eventual policy recommendations by a focus on the future substitute teacher scheme.

Plan of action and timeline for activities

5. Subject to confirmation at the next meeting, and involvement of other Ministry of Education units and representatives of teacher colleges, participants agreed to take initial responsibility for the following chapters of the conceptual framework:
   - Chapters I and II: Ministry of Education (MOE), Divisions of Planning and Human Resources
   - Chapter III: Teachers Professional Development Unit; MOE, Divisions of School Supervision and Evaluation and Research; and Teacher colleges
   - Chapter IV: Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers’ Association (TTUTA); and MOE, Division of Human Resources
   - Chapter V: Ministry of Labour; TTUTA; and ECA
   - Chapter VI: Steering Group

6. The ILO will provide logistical support to organisation of steering group meetings at least in the initial stages, will offer technical backup to the steering group’s work as needed, especially to organize review of drafts of the national report or other advisory services, and will give limited financial backing (US $ 5,000) to the steering group’s work to complete the assessment on presentation of a budgeted estimate. The ILO has also offered to work with the steering group to mobilize additional resources from bilateral or multilateral partners, including UNESCO, if needed to successfully complete the work. The ILO will discuss possible cooperation on a regional thematic paper about teachers’ mobility with the Commonwealth Secretariat at a meeting convened to examine follow-up work on the recently adopted protocol concerning teacher recruitment.

7. It was agreed that the National Steering Group would next meet on 13 January 2005 in the MOE Conference room unless otherwise indicated. The purposes of that meeting would be to:
   a. review commitments and timelines on completing the national assessment based on the agreed conceptual framework as revised;
b. examine additional technical and financial support as needed to assist in producing the document within the programme timeframe, including local consultancy expertise, a budget estimate and proposed terms of reference to the ILO;

c. consider invitations to additional educational stakeholders to join the steering group and indications of their role and status, notably representatives of groups identified as important in the initial meeting: the teachers’ colleges; the principals’ associations; the PTA; and private schools.

Regional policy dialogue forum

8. To enhance the value of information exchanges and dialogue, the steering group urged the ILO to look at possibilities for expanding the regional policy dialogue forum to countries in the Caribbean other than those participating in all phases of the programme (for the moment Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, and possibly Dominican Republic). The ILO has agreed to examine options bearing in mind available financial resources, and to explore with the steering group the prospects of convening the forum in Trinidad and Tobago. Likely dates for such a forum would be the period October to early December 2005.

NSG Chair and composition

9. The Chair and Convenor of the NSG will be the Project Manager of the Teachers’ Professional Development Unit, Dr. Myers, aided by other divisions of the Ministry of Education and by the Ministry of Labour (MOL). The Vice-Chair will be the President of TTUTA.

9. The core partners of the NSG are understood to be the Government (MOE, various divisions as indicated above, and MOL), TTUTA and ECA. Additional education stakeholders will be invited to participate as needed, beginning with those indicated above (paragraph 7), and their status decided by the core partners.

Notes prepared and submitted by the ILO as initial convenor

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List of Participants

Government

*Ministry of Education*

**Dr. Ival Melville Myers**, Project Manager, Teacher Professional Development Unit
**Ms. Lydia Jones**, Special Education Specialist, Teacher Professional Development Unit
**Ms. Patricia Bissessar**, ECCG, Teacher Professional Development Unit
**Mr. Samuel Lochan**, Teacher Professional Development Unit

**Mr. Glenford Joseph**, Director, Human Resources
**Ms. Chanwati Sookra**, Senior Human Resource Officer (Ag), Human Resources and Planning
**Ms. Jennifer Doyle**, School Supervisor II
**Ms. Donnis Bourne**, Human Resource Officer III, Primary
**Mr. Kevan Williams**, Human Resource Officer IV, Contracts

*Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development*

**Ms. Omalisa Baldeo**, Planning Officer I

Teachers’ Organisations

**Mr. Clyde Permell**, President, *Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers’ Association (TTUTA)*

Employers’ Organisations

Ms. La Toya Khan, Human Resources Officer, *Employers’ Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECA)*

International Labour Office (ex-officio)

**Mr. George Gamerdinger**, Senior Specialist, HRD and Vocational Training, *Sub-regional office for the Caribbean, Port of Spain*

**Mr. Bill Ratteree**, Education Sector Specialist, *ILO Geneva*