



## News Release

13 November 2002

### EDUCATION GOES GLOBAL

A prestigious international education conference to be held in Edinburgh will focus on 'access, inclusion and achievement', Education Minister Cathy Jamieson announced today.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) will bring together Education Ministers, academics, teachers, parents and young people from the 54 Commonwealth countries.

Launching the 15CCEM conference website at Edinburgh's Usher Hall, one of the venues for next year's conference, Ms Jamieson said:

"I am delighted that Edinburgh will host this important international educational forum on behalf of the UK. It will be an invaluable way of learning from other countries, sharing good practice and discussing new and innovative ways to improve education.

"All children and young people, whatever their background, should be able to participate fully in education. We must ensure all young people have access to education because it is one of the basic routes out of poverty, and a fundamental right to all in a just society.

"We look forward to welcoming the Commonwealth's Education Ministers to Scotland, as well as teachers, parents and in particular children. 15CCEM will also help to promote Scotland as a tourist destination and build an understanding of other cultures, as well as giving young people the opportunity to meet and develop their potential as active citizens."

Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon said:

“This meeting will provide a unique forum for Commonwealth Education Ministers. It will allow them to discuss strategies aimed at opening the doors of learning for every child in the Commonwealth and providing the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential and play their full part in the future of their communities. Demands in the Commonwealth for education have never been greater – Commonwealth children cannot be left behind.”

Department for Education and Skills Secretary of State Charles Clarke said:

"The themes of access, inclusion and achievement are central to the UK's agenda for educational reform as well as being relevant to the whole Commonwealth. We are keen to share experience with our partners in the Commonwealth. I hope this is going to be the best conference yet and one which all countries involved gain a great deal of value from."

Welsh Minister for Education and Life-Long Learning Jane Davidson said the conference's website ([www.15ccem.com](http://www.15ccem.com)) will prove to be an important resource.

"The website will put the window of the world on the Commonwealth. It provides an opportunity for everyone in education from ministers, academics, teachers, parents and most importantly the young people to share ideas, experiences and examples of best practice across the Commonwealth.

"The interactive site will be updated daily and will hold details on each Commonwealth country, along with information on each education minister with newsletters and competitions issued regularly, in preparation for the conference. Modern technology means today's Commonwealth is truly on our doorstep."

Minister of State with responsibility for education in Northern Ireland, Jane Kennedy, said she was delighted that the Conference would provide an opportunity for educationalists and young people from all over the UK to participate in and contribute to the proceedings of this important event.

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) will be held at Edinburgh International Conference Centre from Monday 27 to Thursday 30 October 2003. Every Education Minister in the 54 Commonwealth countries will be invited. Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest. The last meeting was held in Halifax Nova Scotia in 2000.
2. The 15CCEM will build on the agreements and decisions taken in the earlier meetings as well as focussing on 'Closing the Gap: Access, Inclusion, Achievement'. Ministers will address the key issues of ensuring all children and young people have access to

the highest quality education, that their education is fully inclusive and that it enables them to maximise achievement.

3. 15CCEM includes a Parallel Symposium from a wide range of Commonwealth educators to address the more technical aspects of the topics being discussed by Ministers as well as delivery, diversity and leadership.
4. 15CCEM will also feature two events at the Edinburgh's Usher Hall to encourage young people's participation and enjoyment:
  - A showcase of best practice - concentrating on the direct involvement of young people in cutting edge educational processes
  - The first Commonwealth Education Youth Summit - to debate education issues and contribute to the final document of the 15CCEM - The Edinburgh Communiqué
5. [www.15ccem.com](http://www.15ccem.com) will be an important resource for 15CCEM delegates of all ages.
6. Young people from Boroughmuir High School, Edinburgh, and two Commonwealth post-graduate students supported the 15CCEM website launch and discussed the positive role of the Commonwealth and its educational opportunities. The 12 Boroughmuir pupils are from diverse Commonwealth backgrounds. The Commonwealth students attend further and higher education courses in Scotland with assistance from the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowships Plan.

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