



AFRICA FORUM OF TEACHING REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

Forum Africain des Autorités de Contrôle de l'Enseignement

www.africateachingauthorities.org

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COMMUNIQUE

**THE 4TH TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AFRICA CONFERENCE HELD AT THE
WINDHOEK COUNTRY CLUB & RESORT, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA
JUNE 8 - 13, 2015**

THEME

“THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN AFRICA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE”

1. PREAMBLE

The African Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (AFTRA) is an association of the Teaching Regulatory Authorities which is open to all African countries. The organization has grown in strength from its initial establishment by South African Council for Educators (SACE) and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and now includes nearly twenty countries in its fold. This is a positive and encouraging development for the promotion of professionalism amongst teachers in the continent. AFTRA is a subset of the International Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (IFTRA).

Some objectives of AFTRA are to promote the establishment of the Teaching Regulatory Authorities for the promotion and enhancement of the status of the Teaching profession throughout Africa, set international standards for the profession and facilitate co-operation among member nations for the benefit of the education systems of the various countries.

2. OPENING CEREMONY

The conference opening session was chaired by the AFTRA Executive Director, Professor Steve Nwokeocha. The dignitaries that graced the Opening Ceremony and participated in the Conference included Mr. Alfred Ilukena, Permanent Secretary of Education, Arts and Culture, Republic of Namibia; Hon. Sydney Mushanga, MP and Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, Republic of Zambia; Dr. Narciso Damasio dos Santos Benedito, Secretary of State for Professional Technical Training and Education, Republic of Angola; Hon. Thabang Kholumo, Deputy Minister of Education and Training, Kingdom of Lesotho; Ms. Aldelheid Awases, Co-Chair, United Nations Task Force on Teachers for EFA, Paris, France; Rej Brijraj, AFTRA President and Chief Executive, South African Council for Educators; Ms. Veronica Hofmeester, Chairperson, South African Council for Educators and Co-Chairperson of AFTRA; Mr. Emmanuel Fatoma Senior Regional Coordinator, Education International, Africa Regional Office, Accra, Ghana; Mr. Christopher Yalukanda, Chairman, Teaching Council of Zambia; Mr. Ebby Mubanga, Registrar, Teaching Council of Zambia; Ms. Luisa Maria Alves Grilo, Director General, Instituto Nacional de Formacao de Quadros da Educao (INFQE), Republic of Angola; Mr. Ishmael Sefeane, Commissioner of the Teaching Service, Lesotho; H.E. Sylvia B. Chalikova, Zambian High Commissioner in Namibia; Mr. Newman Bubala, General Secretary, Zambian National Union of Teachers (ZNUT); Comrade Simeon Kavila, President, Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU) and Comrade Basilius Haingura, Secretary General of Union NANTU.

In his address the President of the Namibia National Teachers Union (**NANTU**) welcomed and expressed his union's appreciation for being afforded the opportunity to host the conference and pledged its commitment to AFTRA. He made a passionate plea to all African Governments to support this noble initiative.

AFTRA President, Mr. Rej. Brijraj, stressed the importance of Africa rising and staking its claim on the development of the continent and more especially in professionalizing, supporting and appreciating teachers in the continent. On behalf of SACE, he also sincerely and unreservedly apologized for the unfortunate attacks on fellow African citizens recently in South Africa. He attributed these atrocities to criminal elements and dark forces. He assured the Conference that the Government and the People of South Africa had taken a firm stand against xenophobia. In particular SACE was committed to ensuring that foreign educators were not discriminated against.

The IFTRA President and Chief Executive of the Ontario College of Teachers, Canada, Mr. Michael Salvatori, addressed the Conference via video message. He welcomed participants and commended AFTRA for its Conference and Roundtable which have become a model for other IFTRA continental blocs. He expressed the need for IFTRA to move from a Forum to a Federation in order to strengthen its global significance and regulatory control of the teaching profession.

Goodwill messages were presented at the Opening Ceremony by several organisations and distinguished personalities. They included the Deputy Minister of Education, Zambia; Deputy Minister of Education, Kingdom of Lesotho; Secretary of State for Education, Republic of Angola; Senior Regional Coordinator of the Education International in Africa; and Co-Chair of the United Nations Task Force on Teachers for EFA. The speakers pledged the commitment and support of their various governments and organisations to teacher professionalism and the vision and mission of AFTRA.

The Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Republic of Namibia expressed the country's appreciation for being given the opportunity to host the AFTRA Conference and Roundtable. He apologized for the Minister's absence due to an on-going cabinet meeting. He stated that Namibia will at all times stand with AFTRA and wished all delegates fruitful deliberations. He then declared the conference open. The opening ceremony featured the Namibian Cultural Group after which the second session of paper presentation then convened.

3. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The tone for the Conference was set by three distinguished speakers whose presentations in the first plenary session enriched the Conference. The speakers and their topics were as follows:

- Ms. Adelheid M Awases, Co-Chair of the UN Task Force on Teachers for EFA - *"Update on activities of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All (EFA)"*
- Dr. Narciso Damasio dos Santos Benedito, Secretary of State for Education, Angola - *"Teacher Professionalization in the Republic of Angola"*
- Mr. Ebby Mubanga, Registrar of the Zambia Teachers Council - *"Critical issues affecting Teaching and Learning in Africa"*

4. SYNDICATE PAPER PRESENTATIONS

AFTRA received forty (40) papers on topics related to the conference theme, which it published. The papers were of very high quality and expertly presented.

5. ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE PRESENTATIONS

- I. Policy, capacity and financial gaps that are evident throughout the continent and have to be reduced.
- II. The profession in Africa is characterized poor teacher training programmes, lack of recognition and the negative societal perceptions.
- III. Inadequate involvement of teachers in all facets of the profession including decision making Processes.
- IV. Teaching and learning in Africa face challenges relating to, amongst others: Lack of access to quality education, poverty, gender disparity and poor infrastructure throughout the education system from elementary schooling up to tertiary institutions.
- V. The scourge of HIV/Aids epidemic has a negative effect on quality teaching and learning in Africa.
- VI. Lack of quality research initiatives and findings that are aimed at shaping and improving the quality of teaching and learning appropriate to the African context.
- VII. The need for more vigorous support and appreciation of teachers to enhance the status of the teaching profession.
- VIII. The need to share best practice and innovations among teaching regulatory authorities
- IX. Over emphasis of education on good grades rather than ethics, nation building and holistic Development.
- X. The need to devise and implement strategies to promote peaceful co-existence in Africa with respect to all cultures in a human rights framework.
- XI. High illiteracy rate in Africa which must be eradicated through education.

6. RESOLUTIONS

- Quality research needs to be enhanced to strengthen the teaching profession especially to improve the quality of pre-service and in-service teacher education.
- AFTRA needs to pursue and engage with relevant authorities to ensure that adequate resources are made available for qualitative teaching and learning
- Implementation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all teachers is Fundamental
- Countries should endeavor to set up Professional Council/Teachers Regulatory Authorities which shall be in line with its national laws and historical contexts.
- AFTRA is commended for working closely with UNESCO, UN Task Force on Teachers for EFA and EI and the Conference urged AFTRA to intensify the collaboration.
- AFTRA and member organizations to ensure Code of Ethics and Professional Standards are developed and popularized, emphasizing the role of teachers.
- AFTRA to promote the professionalization of teaching in higher education using the relevant supervisory authorities for higher education in the various countries.
- AFTRA should play advocacy, monitoring and evaluation roles to promote good governance and efficient administration of the education systems in Africa.
- Education systems should contain rewards and incentives (material and intrinsic) for teachers and learners.
- Mentorship, induction and practice teaching to be introduced where lacking.
- A culture of care and promotion of values must underpin teaching and learning.
- The role of private schooling, commercialization and marketization of education needs

to be discussed by AFTRA.

- AFTRA to follow up issues emerging from presentations.
- E-learning should be used as one of the important strategies to accelerate teacher initial education and professional development.

7. CONCLUSION

The President paid special tributes to the TRCN, its Register and Chief Executive Professor Addson Wokocha who was unavoidably absent and the Executive Director Professor Steve Nwokeocha for their commitment and sacrifice to raise AFTRA to its current stature. He indicated to conference that the Executive Director had almost single-handedly prepared the AFTRA Conference at personal cost due to AFTRA's financial situation.

He expressed AFTRA's appreciation and congratulations to the leadership of NANTU for their courageous efforts and sponsorship of AFTRA Conference and Roundtable. He praised the Ministry of Education, Republic of Namibia for creditably discharging its roles as Conference Patron.

He thanked the Secretariat, Communique team and Logistical support team and acknowledged the outstanding performance of the Co-Director of AFTRA, Mr. Themba Ndhlovu who also managed logistical and clerical services.

He concluded by expressing gratitude to all presenters, dignitaries and delegates for enriching the discourse on teacher professionalism in Africa and presented certificates to all participants. In his closing remarks, the AFTRA President poignantly recalled the philosophy of the great father, Nelson Mandela and committed AFTRA and all its affiliates to ensure "non-domination of anyone by another" and the use of "education as a key to transformation."

He spoke about the African Union (AU) flag and said it is a reminder to all to promote unity in Africa towards world leadership.

The Deputy President of NANTU, Comrade Josef Dinyando, conveyed the vote of thanks and re-asserted NANTU's commitments to the goals and aspiration of AFTRA.

The official from the Ministry of Education, Ms. Loide Kapenda, confirmed the pledge/readiness of the Ministry towards setting up a Regulatory Authority for Teachers in Namibia.



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