

**TEACHERS TASK FORCE POLICY**

**DIALOGUE FORUM**

**Windhoek, 28-29 November 2012**

**Synthesis for Sub-theme Two:**

**Teachers' status and working**

**conditions**

# 1. Key issues/concepts focusing on:

## a. current teaching conditions;

“If you want a job to make a difference in your life, don’t opt for teaching” a popular saying in West Africa

Efforts aimed at education reforms in Africa have often been limited to the construction of classrooms, curriculum reforms, prescription of new text books , changes in the structure of the education system, new designation of bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education, or a

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split of the Ministry of Education into Basic Education and Higher Education and in some countries Technical and vocational Education

- No one has ever estimated the cost of such restructuring which by every estimation can be costly. Teacher matters have never been at the front burner of education reforms. If any, they have always been an after – thought.

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- What matters in the reform agenda is that teachers workload should be increased with additional responsibilities given them; they should implement a not so well thought out plan, should be subservient to authority with no professional freedom; while being asked to remain dedicated to teaching even in the face of harsh teaching and learning conditions

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- The EFA has provided an opportunity to focus on teachers because it has become increasingly clear that teachers matter in the delivery of quality education. As such, issues such as quality pre service teacher education, an enabling school environment, school infrastructure and school leadership, teacher morale and motivation have all become key concerns for policy makers; But how far have these issues been made a reality? In most instances they have been empty rhetoric.

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- True, classrooms have been built especially with funding from the world bank but at a whopping cost of USD 10 000 per classroom even in rural areas. But these classrooms remain without the requisite furniture for teachers and learners, no adequate and relevant text books, over crowded with a PTR of 1 to 60 and in some instances 1 to 120.

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- It is also true that many classrooms especially at primary level are manned by ill prepared teachers such as contract teachers who work with no security of tenure , very low remuneration, and with no pedagogical training etc
- It should be borne in mind that the conditions under which teachers teach are the same conditions under which children learn

## **Legal, Administrative and Management frameworks for High Teacher Motivation and Quality Education outcomes;**

- Since teacher cost accounts for a very high percentage of the education budget, their management as a service personnel should be streamlined, legally established with a framework for transparency in recruitment, deployment, career advancement, opportunities for regular in-service training and further education.



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- In some countries teachers have multiple employers leading to a situation in which those who recruit teachers may not be the ones paying their salaries. Consequently, teachers pay roll have been infested with GHOST TEACHERS causing over expenditures and consequently delay in the payment of salaries.

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A form of Teacher Management System(TMS) has evolved through legislation in some parts of Africa, with the establishment of Teachers Service Commissions(TSC) or an Education Service(ES)with the sole responsibility to manage and account for teachers in the public schools.

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- This in a way will weed out GHOST TEACHERS who have heavily impinged on the wage bills in the education sector. Teachers favour and Education Service , the kind that exists in Ghana.

# Perceptions and Practices Negatively Affecting Teacher Motivation;

- Teaching as an occupation has never been well understood by either policy makers, economy minded-innovators or wider society. Teachers are perceived to be conservative and an obstacle to reforms in education.
- Teaching is perceived as a relaxed job in which one stands in front of children in a classroom

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and talk for a given period and goes home at the expiration of the school time-table. This gives the impression that any one can become a teacher. As a result, the supply of so called teachers including even the unemployables, have negatively impacted on the image and status of the practitioners relegating teaching to either a semi- profession or no profession at all.

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- With the abundant supply of “teachers” the reward for work has been dismally low with salaries ranging from USD 30 to 100 per month in some countries in sub Sahara Africa.
- The recruitment of contract teachers being initially conceived as a stop gap measure to fill in the teacher gap has become a permanent practice in terms of recruitment to the profession.
- Governments have always claimed that teacher remuneration cannot match with those in state parastatals and civil service because of their numbers.

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- But these numbers are NEEDED to provide the much needed service for quality teaching and learning. This argument has often been a de-motivating factor to teachers thus giving them the drive to move elsewhere like the customs, immigration, the police and army, NGO's etc.
- The teaching profession therefore has been mismanaged, under-developed, disrespected and ignored. Teachers deserve decent salary, recognition and rewards commensurate to the value of their services. It is often said that if you want to know how much a country values education, just have a look at their teachers. This speaks volumes.

## Mechanisms/improvements in mechanisms facilitating social dialogue on teachers' living and working conditions & educational issues;

- The UNESCO/ILO RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STATUS OF TEACHERS remains as relevant today as it was when conceived in 1966. However, its tenets have been ignored in most instances when discussing working and living conditions of teachers.



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- The new generation of bureaucrats in the Ministries of Education are hardly aware of its existence, nor its utilitarian value. In short, these recommendations have been relegated to the back burner.
- Teachers and their organisations hardly enjoy a practice of institutionalised social dialogue with the Ministries of Education

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- At best consultations have been adhoc and often impromptu. We therefore need at the level of the ILO, a convention on the status of teachers that will take into account some of the vital issues in the RECOMMENDATIONS so that prospects will exist for governments who ratify it to be bound by its provisions. Collective bargaining mechanisms which in the past have been enjoyed by teachers unions are now under attack.

# **Relationship between teachers' living and working conditions and effective educational processes**

- There is no gain- saying that there is a strong connect between a well trained, well paid and motivated teacher and learning outcomes;

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- However, from practical experience, well paid teachers cannot afford to organise extra lessons for fees, nor afford to ignore the imperative need for the preparation of lesson notes and scheme of work. Suffice it to say however that the ultimate result of good learning outcomes will be contingent on a combination of good remuneration for teachers and the provision of the where-with-

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all, aided by the level and quality of teacher training.

- Teachers whose salary are delayed for one to twelve months or more have no commitment to teaching. Neither are those who get below the poverty line salaries. So the whole question of income distribution at national level should be re-examined by the various governments in Africa.

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- Added to this is the need for an institutionalised system of social dialogue through consultations and collective bargaining for teachers and their organisations.

**END**

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