

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

**UNION HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MINISTER SMT SMRITI IRANI ATTENDS THE 19TH
CONFERENCE OF THE COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS AT NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS**

**INDIA TO SET UP MALVIYA COMMONWEALTH CHAIR FOR CROSS BORDER TEACHER
EDUCATION, ANNOUNCES UNION HRD MINISTER SMT SMRITI IRANI**

**OPPORTUNE TIME FOR COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES TO WORK TOWARDS RATIONALIZING
METHODS FOR INCLUSIVE AND QUALITATIVE EXPANSION OF EDUCATION IN RESPECTIVE
COUNTRIES, SAYS UNION HRD MINISTER SMT SMRITI IRANI**

The 19th Conference of the Commonwealth Education Ministers was held at Nassau, the Bahamas from June 22 to 26, 2015. The Conference which deliberated upon *Quality Education for Equitable Development* was attended by the education ministers of 38 Commonwealth countries. The Union Minister for Human Resources Development Smt. Smriti Irani led the Indian delegation which comprised Chairman UGC, Chairman NIOS and JS School Education and Literacy, MHRD.

The Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of the Bahamas Mr. Perry Gladstone Christie. The plenary sessions were chaired by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, the Bahamas Mr. Jerome K. Fitzgerald.

While responding to the issue paper on *Quality Education for Equitable Development: Performance, Paths, Productivity* the Union Minister Smt. Smriti Irani said that there could be no more opportune time than now that the Commonwealth countries work towards a more coordinated and holistic approach towards rationalizing methods and processes for inclusive and qualitative expansion of education in the respective countries. She underlined the significance of creating common platforms for deliberations on issues of mutual

concerns so that issues like expansion, equity and excellence could be addressed in an integrated perspective. She also observed that a key measure of inclusive education would require significant increase in skill development initiatives to meet the emerging human resource requirements.

During her interventions the Union Minister observed that access to educational opportunities continues to bear the stamp of multiple dimensions of inequality that characterize the challenges of world communities and having regard to that she called upon the Commonwealth countries to deliberate on this important subject. While reflecting on the issue of quality she said that the concern of quality in education would remain the centre stage of deliberations of each country of the Commonwealth as a key parameter for sustainable development and therefore there is a need to create a platform to share both the resources and the best practices.

The Union Human Resource Development Minister has made five major offers which were readily embraced by all the participating countries. She announced that India would set up ***The Malviya Commonwealth Chair for Cross Border Teacher Education*** which will focus on issues pertaining to curriculum development, pedagogy, student assessment, pre-service and in-service teacher training and capacity development. She also proposed to set up a *Commonwealth Consortium for Research* which can function in collaboration with the *Commonwealth Education hub* and provide cross funding for research projects which member nations deem appropriate. She also announced that India would provide its e-Learning platform SWAYAM to host e-courseware developed by Commonwealth of Learning. In addition she also proposed that India would post digitized materials of Commonwealth countries on its soon-to-be established national e-Library. Her contention about strengthening of public institutions to bring about qualitative improvements in education at all levels was greatly appreciated by the member countries. These specific announcements of the Union Minister became the part of Nassau Declaration which was unanimously adopted by the member countries.

India's active participation was greatly appreciated by the member countries as also by the Secretary General of the Commonwealth as well as by the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth of Learning. The Commonwealth Secretary General Mr. Kamlesh Sharma commended India for its generosity in coming forward with innovative ideas and practical financial support for increased Commonwealth collaboration on teacher education and research. He said that *"the establishment of the Malviya Commonwealth Chair and the Commonwealth Consortium of Research are immensely valuable. They were warmly welcomed by Ministers as demonstrating India's deep and continuing commitment to the Commonwealth of which it is a founding member."*

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