

# ROUNDTABLE OF TEACHING REGULATORY AUTHORITIES IN AFRICA MR REJ BRIJRAJ THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATORS (SACE)

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) is a professional body established in terms of the SACE Act of 2000. SACE aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession through the registration of professionally qualified and competent educators, manage and quality assure their continuing professional development, safeguard standards of professional ethics. It achieves this mandate through the three core functions:

- Registration of teachers in the public and independent schools, Early childhood development centres, Adult Basic Education Centres , and Further Education and Training Colleges;
- Promoting the development of educators by managing and implementing the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system and programmes that contribute to building the image and status of the teaching profession; and
- Promoting good professional conduct and ensuring that they adhere to the code of professional ethics.

Furthermore, SACE has re-defined its roles as follows:

- Regulation and protection of the teaching profession;
- Development of the teaching profession;
- Promoting teaching as a profession; promoting research on professional matters;
- Informing the teaching profession; and
- Creating awareness of SACE activities and professional matters to the educators.

SACE welcomes the opportunity to co-host the first roundtable of teaching regulatory authorities in Africa with the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). In the past two years, SACE and TRCN developed strong working relations that have amongst other things, ensured that this roundtable takes place for purposes of promoting the professionalisation of teaching across the countries of the world and advancement of international co-operation among member nations. The roundtable should be seen, amongst other things, as a good opportunity to discuss the emerging globalisation of the teaching profession with special focus on Africa. This will also assist in finding various strategic ways of having more teaching Councils in Africa given the fact that Africa has two professional Councils only- SACE and TRCN. SACE and TRCN as the two existing teaching Councils in Africa should also use the roundtable to share their experiences with other nations. They should also be available to provide ongoing support to countries intending to establish their own teaching councils.

This roundtable came at an opportune time when SACE will be hosting the international biennial conference of the International Forum for Teaching Regulatory Authorities (IFTRA) in 2011. The discussions, decisions, and resolutions of this roundtable should feed into and inform the proceedings of the IFTRA conference. The last IFTRA conference decided that invitations of the IFTRA conference would be in future be extended to Ministries of Education of countries that were yet to establish teaching councils so that they could participate and witness the critical importance of the councils and thereby be motivated to establish their own teaching councils as a matter of urgency. This decision will be followed through as SACE finalises plans and preparations for the 2011 IFTRA conference. We also want to urge countries and Ministries of Education gathered here to be part of the 2011 IFTRA conference so that IFTRA's goal of making teaching an international profession could be realised.

Furthermore our wish that the roundtable should, amongst other things, focus on teacher migration issues. Teacher migration has been on the agenda of many countries for some time because of high rate of teacher mobility across the globe. As Africa, we are also experiencing teacher migration within the continent. The biggest challenge is, how do we deal with issues such as professional registration, recognition of qualifications for employment purposes, teacher professional designation status, and letters of good professional standing (letter from a teaching council attesting that teachers from a foreign country are qualified, registered, and free from any criminal convictions or pending investigation) when we have only two teaching councils in Africa? The SACE registration database shows that Zimbabwe is leading followed by Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Lesotho, Uganda and others. It has been a lot easier to deal with the registration of the registration of the Nigerian teachers because Nigeria has a teaching council and well established relations with SACE. The call for the establishment of teaching councils in member countries gathered here will assist a great deal in dealing with these flagged issues.

In conclusion, I want to wish all the delegates well. SACE will always be available to provide support and assist where necessary and possible. We hope to see most of you in South Africa at the 2011 IFTRA conference.