



AFRICA FORUM OF TEACHING REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

(Le Forum d' Afrique d'Enseigner Régulateur Autorités)

HEADQUARTERS: Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria

(Federal Ministry of Education)

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MINUTES

OF THE 6TH AFTRA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATORS (SACE) OFFICE, 240 LENCHEN AVENUE, CENTURION, SOUTH AFRICA APRIL 2, 2014

1. ATTENDANCE

SN	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANISATION
1	Rej Brijraj	AFTRA President/SACE CEO	South African Council for Educators
2	Prof Addison Mark Wokocha	AFTRA Secretary General/TRCN CEO	Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria
3	Mr. Sibusiso Mchunu	Deputy Chair	South African Council for Educators
4	Ms. Tsedi Dipholo	Chief Operations Officer & Co-AFTRA Executive Director	South African Council for Educators
5	Ella Mokgalane	Senior Manager, Professional Development and Research	South African Council for Educators
6	Themba Ndhlovu	Manager, Communications	South African Council for Educators
7	Dr. Steve Nwokeocha	AFTRA Executive Director	Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria

2. ABSENT WITH APOLOGY

- Ms. Veronica Hofmeester – Chair of SACE
- Thomas Baafi of Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT)
- Tanzania Teachers Union
- Teachers Service Commission Kenya

Some countries could not attend due to issues of visa and other travel difficulties.

The President also commended the Secretariat for effectively sending out correspondences and communicating with Executive Board members. Mr Baafi of GNAT however sent a progress report.

3. COMMENCEMENT:

The first part of the meeting was a tour of the new building complex of SACE led by the SACE CEO and AFTRA President. Executive Board members commended SACE for the befitting building and described it as fantastic.

The actual meeting started at 11 am with introductions. This was followed by opening remarks by the President. He praised the AFTRA Secretary General and his Officers for keeping AFTRA going. He regretted that some other Board members could not make the meeting after initially confirming that they would come. He also stated that SACE has a new Chairperson, Ms. Veronica Hofmeester who promised to be at the meeting.

He informed that the meeting folder has several previous documents just to keep members abreast of vision and mission of AFTRA and the tasks ahead. The President indicated that the annexures in meeting folders are for noting and record keeping and not just for reading at meeting.. He stated that the last Executive Board meeting agreed on several issues which the meeting has to deliberate on and ensure effective implementation. He also stated that the coming IFTRA November 2014 should also be discussed at the meeting. He then declared the meeting open and stated that the meeting was well constituted.

The following is a summary of the President's written address:

i. Welcome

As President of AFTRA it is a privilege to welcome our visitors, both AFTRA members and observers to our shores. It is a special honour that you bless SACE's premises with your presence. It is always assuring to have our Executive Director, Dr Steve and our Secretary General, Prof Addison with us. It is no secret that they keep the AFTRA ship afloat with their tireless efforts, generous resources and passionate conviction. Thanks again. Let us also recognize the presence and assurance of the SACE chairperson - Mrs Veronica Hofmeester, fellow SACE Councilors and colleagues. It is heartening to see that our comrades from Ghana, who will be preparing the way for the "3rd AFTRA Teaching and Learning in Africa Conference" and "5th AFTRA Round Table" to be held in ACCRA, Ghana from 9th to 15th OF June 2014.

ii. Background

Let us remind ourselves of what AFTRA (African Forum for Teacher Regulatory Authorities) and IFTRA (International Forum for Teacher Regulatory Authorities) aim to do. According to Dr Steve (AFTRA – Executive Director), "The Key aims of AFTRA and IFTRA are to:

- 1) Reposition the Teaching Profession globally;
- 2) Set international standards for the Teaching Profession;
- 3) Develop protocol and platforms that will ensure maximum benefit of international teacher mobility and guarantee fair treatment of teachers working in countries other than their own;
- 4) Establish co-operation with respect to all aspects of the teaching profession;
- 5) Exchange best practices among member countries; and
- 6) Collectively undertake any action that will raise teacher welfare, quality and status, nationally and internationally."

iii. Objectives

Having outlined what we stand for, let's explore the twofold objectives of today's meeting. On the one hand the meeting needs to be updated on progress made regarding the issues raised in the 4th Roundtable, 2nd Conference and last Executive Board meeting, and other developments since June 2013.

On the other hand, we must lay out plans, agenda and logistics for the Roundtable and Conference coming up in Accra in June 2014.

The past Steering Committee has already broken ground by providing the theme **"Holistic Education for Contemporary Africa."** Under this banner we could try to weave in some of the following notions (which have already been raised):

- 1) Ethics, values and attitudes appropriate to Contemporary African Citizens;
- 2) Holistic Teacher & learner development;
- 3) Safety in schools;
- 4) Roles & Responsibilities of Private Schools in Africa;
- 5) Re-invoking the Philosophy of Ubuntu and humanism in our schools;
- 6) Collaboration Projects; and
- 7) Other sub themes identified in the notice for June.

In addition, the agenda may accommodate;

- 1) Country progress reports;
- 2) Updates since June 2013;
- 3) IFTRA preparation; and
- 4) The way forward.

iv. Declaration:

With these opening comments, which I put for your consideration, it is my pleasure to declare this AFTRA Steering Committee open.

4. PRESENTATION BY AFTRA SECRETARY GENERAL

The Secretary General commended the President for compiling several vital AFTRA correspondences and Reports into a sort of Report or book for the meeting. In admiring the approach, the meeting agreed to give SACE through Mr. Themba most AFTRA records such as Reports of all Roundtables and Conference, minutes of AFTRA Executive Board meetings, etc for a comprehensive binding into a book for better record keeping and updating of AFTRA organisations.

The Secretary General presented the minutes of last meeting and there was no correction. The meeting then unanimously endorsed the minutes.

The Secretary General also read his report which in brief was as follows:

i. Publicity of AFTRA International Conference and Roundtable

The Secretary General's Office following the tradition of AFTRA sent out letters of publicity to all Ministers of Education in Africa, Universities, Teaching Regulatory Authorities, Teachers Union and other relevant bodies. Letters were also written to the hosts and partners of the AFTRA events in Ghana such as the Minister of Education, Ghana Education Service, Ghana Teaching Council, Ghana National Association of Teachers, University of Cape Coast and the University of Education Winneba. Only the University of Cape Coast (letter attached) has replied formally. However, the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) has assured us that they equally reached out to all of them. However, GNAT advises that AFTRA

should get in touch with the Minister of Education because the Minister requested for more information about AFTRA.

ii. Proposed visit to the African Union

The Secretary General's Office wrote the African Union to pay a courtesy call. The letter was positively acknowledged by the African Union Head of Education who promised to secure a date and get back to us. But she never did. We suppose it is due to the tight schedule of the African Union Commissioner of Education who we sought to meet.

iii. Presentation of Paper by the AFTRA President at the April 21, 2014 African Union Conference in Cameroon

The Secretary General's Office wrote the African Union to secure opportunity for the AFTRA President to address the African Union Conference of Ministers in April 2014 at Cameroon and this was granted. A copy of the letter of request is attached.

iv. AFTRA Membership of the UN International Task Force on Teachers for EFA

Following the earlier contacts made with UNESCO at the highest level and the African Union, AFTRA was in 2013 at the Democratic Republic of Congo admitted as a member of the UN International Task Force on Teachers for EFA based in Paris, France. The Task Force is a high level UN body comprising all relevant international organisations and countries dedicated to the facilitation of teachers for EFA in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The AFTRA Executive Director has since been working with the Task Force on day to day basis. Executive Board members will be notified about future meetings of the Task Force so they can attend.

v. AFTRA Commissioned to do UNESCO Research on Teacher Qualifications Framework in Nigeria and The Gambia

As part of the African Union objectives, the UNESCO Dakar Senegal commissioned AFTRA to conduct a research on Teacher Professional Development and Qualification Framework in Nigeria and The Gambia. The outcome of the research is expected to guide the development of Teacher Qualification Framework for West Africa and later Africa by the African Union. The research was conducted by the AFTRA Executive Director and has just been completed. UNESCO Dakar offered to subsidize the research with the sum of 14, 000 USD while AFTRA will equally assist the research team. So far, the UNESCO Dakar paid 8,700 leaving a balance of 5,300 USD. The research involved assembling a research team led by Professor Angela Okatahi, Dean Faculty of Education, University of Abuja and other professors and research experts including one from the United Kingdom, Dr. Stella Adagri. The data gathering took place in Nigeria as well as The Gambia in which the AFTRA Executive Director spent a week in The Gambia to supervise the collection of data. A complete copy of the Research Report which is more than 140 pages is attached. It is now being processed to UNESCO and will be one of the key presentations at the African Union Conference in Cameroon this April.

vi. AFTRA Journal

The necessary international editors of the journal have been received by Secretary General's Office from Ghana, TSC Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria. The dummy of the journal is therefore ready to go to press. The journal is in two volumes, one for 2012 AFTRA selected Conference papers and the other for 2013 AFTRA Conference papers. Sample of the cover is attached.

vii. Delegates to AFTRA Conference from TESSA

The AFTRA President received a request from the Open University of the UK to send about 15-20 delegates from the Teachers Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) Project to AFTRA Conference. The President forwarded the request to the Secretary General and we have since been corresponding with the Open University on the issue. The University intends to send a comprehensive list of the delegates soon.

viii. Conference and Roundtable Progress Report

So far about 61 persons have sent completed registration forms to attend the AFTRA Conference and Roundtable while about 26 papers have been received and more are still coming in.

ix. Planned Visit to Ghana for Preliminary Arrangements

Since the last meeting in Ghana, there has been no other visit to Ghana and no payment has been made to concretise arrangements for Conference and Roundtable venue. It is imperative that AFTRA should visit Ghana as soon as possible to make some payments, improve logistic arrangements and also pay courtesy call on the Minister of Education and other critical stakeholders to strengthen arrangement for the events.

x. Invitation Letters and Acceptance of Conference Papers

Beginning this April, we shall start sending out formal invitation letters to the Conference and Roundtable to all those who have sent completed registration forms. The papers will also be assessed and the authors of acceptable papers will be also issued with letters of acceptance.

xi. Finance

There has been serious financial constraint on the part of AFTRA to keep all these activities enumerated above going. However, TRCN has been funding as much as it could. The advance payments to be made in Ghana for the Conference and Roundtable, the assessment of conference papers, printing of AFTRA journals, providing counterpart funds for the UNESCO/AU Research on Teacher Qualification Framework, participation in the UN International Task Team on EFA, production of materials for the 2014 AFTRA events, etc require funds. The meeting therefore may see how AFTRA deal with the issue of finance.

The Secretary General further reminded the meeting that AFTRA has opened domiciliary accounts in both British Pounds and US Dollars. The participants in the forthcoming AFTRA International Conference and Roundtable have been requested to pay their conference fees into the AFTRA accounts so that the amount collected could be easily ascertained.

5. DISCUSSIONS OF MINUTES AND REPORTS BY AFTRA SECRETARY GENERAL

The President once again recorded AFTRA's appreciation and commendation of the work being done by the Office of the Secretary General and the Executive Director. He also requested and this was agreed that a visit by the Secretary General to Ghana be endorsed to enable him make further preparations for the AFTRA events.

He also commended AFTRA Secretary General and Executive Director for producing the Teacher Professional Development and Qualification Framework for UNESCO and African Union - A copy of the Research Report about 156 pages was formally presented to the President by the Secretary General. The President described the work as a landmark that has demonstrated the seriousness of AFTRA in the eyes of the world. He said what was left is for AFTRA to work more to grow the membership. Contributing, a member emphasized the need to keep publicising AFTRA and its achievements. The President, therefore ruled that at the next African Union Conference coming up April 2014, AFTRA should also develop and circulate a document that states what AFTRA is about

and the accomplishments so far. He stated that AFTRA has achieved so much but now the task is to get the world to know about those accomplishments.

Another member after commending the Secretary General's Office, also stated that AFTRA must do more to bring more Ministers of Education and other Teaching Regulatory Authorities to physically participate in AFTRA events and activities. The President agreed with this suggestion and revealed that SACE has plans to visit countries near South Africa to ensure that at least one of those countries are got to be committed to AFTRA. Another SACE member promised that 2014 would be a better year than other years as SACE is committed to mobilising neighbouring countries towards participating in AFTRA events.

A member asked about how enforceable the Teacher Qualification Framework could be after its development. The Secretary General explained that the first step towards enforcing a Teacher Qualification Framework is by developing a document or template showing comparability. This is what the UNESCO-AFTRA Research sets out to do. He further explains how different States in the USA have their different teacher certification and registration criteria as well as professional qualifying examinations called Praxis. However, with comparability documents and memorandum of understanding, several States in the USA are able to co-operate on issues of teacher qualification and mobility. The President finally disclosed the willingness of SACE to send in her Head of Research Ms. Ella and others to be part of future AFTRA Research Projects.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

The President began by asking how to avoid a repetition of the absence of many Board members in subsequent meetings – Is two meetings per year too much or does it call for more reaching out to Board members? Responding, a member felt that the meetings are not too much. He pointed out that Tanzania already concluded to attend and same with Ghana. But the Ghana delegate could not get a visa while Tanzania Teachers Union had a last minute issue. He emphasized that what is required is that Executive Member countries to check their priorities and ensure that AFTRA is given the importance it deserves. Another member reminded the meeting that initially SACE and TRCN sort of divided the African continent and requested SACE and TRCN to cover the respective countries in their regions. He suggested that SACE and TRCN could revisit the decision and implement it. Responding, the Secretary General explained that AFTRA Executive meetings had never been for fun but rather to deal with serious issues. The President then ruled that:

- The Board meeting schedules are ok and endorsed as they are – One meeting in October and one in April. He said the meetings serve different purposes.
- AFTRA should lobby the Executive Board members/organisations to have a back-up set of delegates so that if the Chief Executive Officers and their immediate lieutenants could not attend, they could have other staff to represent them in the Executive Board meetings.
- To send notification and to make communication as early as possible about meetings in order to give three or four months to delegates to prepare and secure visa where necessary.

The President concluded by saying that the absence of the members in the present Board meeting must have been informed by special reasons and not lack of interest by those that could not attend.

The President also asked the Secretary General to explain if the 2014 AFTRA events could still go on in Ghana. The Secretary General explained that the events could go on in Ghana. He stated that hosting countries have no financial obligations, rather the host country is merely used as a venue. The whole funding and mobilisation therefore still lies with AFTRA.

On other ways forward, the following were agreed:

- The creation of AFTRA portal on SACE website

- The President promised to call directly the Chief Executives of the Teachers Service Commission, Education Service Commission and Tanzania Teachers Union.
- The Secretary General is similarly to call the Heads of AFTRA organisations of neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Ghana, etc.
- The President should prepare welcome address for the Conference and Roundtable either as one joint address or separate ones. He should also prepare a key paper for the conference based on the theme of the conference as well as a country report based for the Roundtable.
- The Secretary General should also prepare a key paper for the Conference and country report for the Roundtable.
- All Heads of the Executive Board member organisations will also be invited to write papers for the Conference and a country report for the Roundtable.
- AFTRA should make pronounced presence at the forthcoming IFTRA Conference in Canada, November 2014.
- SACE should check IFTRA records to recall assignments given to it at the last IFTRA Conference in Durban and to see how much could be done. It was observed that SACE was made the Chair of the IFTRA Steering Committee and the next IFTRA Conference Organising Committee at the last IFTRA Conference held at Durban in 2011. However, events seem to have derailed the role as Jamaica could not host the Conference and Canada had to take up the hosting. It was agreed that SACE should get in touch with Canada to review the role of SACE and ensure that SACE plays a key role as expected based on the decision of AFTRA in 2011.
- In terms of Finance, the opening of bank account for AFTRA was said to be a step in the right direction. It was further suggested that some form of financial contributions from AFTRA members may at this point be contemplated but this must be in a very careful way to avoid being issue that could drive away members. External sourcing may also be attempted. And then some other fund raising strategies may be considered as well. A proposal should therefore be made by SACE on Finance for discussion at the next Roundtable to open the debate on funding and get a sense of how the Roundtable feels about it. Thereafter, the Executive Board meeting can then implement the decisions.

7. CLOSING REMARKS

The President thanked members for their quality contributions. He expressed his delight that the poor attendance did not negatively affect enthusiasm and seriousness of discussions. The meeting then adjourned by 2.24 pm.

Rej Brijraj
AFTRA President
& Chief Executive Officer, SACE

Professor Addison Mark Wokocha
AFTRA Secretary General
& Registrar/Chief Executive, TRCN