

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY MRS ANGELA JARDINE, CHAIRPERSON OF THE GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR WALES, WALES, UNITED KINGDOM ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF TEACHING REGULATORY AUTHORITIES (IFTRA) AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 1ST ROUNDTABLE OF TEACHING REGULATORY AUTHORITIES IN AFRICA, HELD AT ABUJA-NIGERIA, OCTOBER 12, 2010

Distinguished guests,

I am Chairperson of the General Teaching Council for Wales in the United Kingdom, so it is very pleasing for me to bring you greetings from the teaching profession in Wales. More importantly on this occasion, I bring you very warm greetings on behalf of the International Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities – IFTRA - which currently has its headquarters at the General Teaching Council for Wales.

IFTRA is the world body of the teaching councils dedicated to ‘the common purpose of supporting the learning and development and the safeguarding of all students and pupils, and the promotion of the status of the teaching profession internationally’.

The International Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities was established last year at the third international conference of Teaching Councils held in my capital city of Wales - Cardiff. We hope that in due course, this international Forum will become a legally constituted, International Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities.

In the Edinburgh Declaration of 2005, the teaching councils committed themselves to:

Work together to develop, promote and implement protocols that support effective sharing of relevant information where teachers and educators have been barred from working with pupils, students and young people;

Share research and evidence in respect of effective ways of ensuring that teachers and educators can engage in career-long professional training and development;

Develop protocols that support the appropriate mutual recognition of initial teacher education programmes and qualifications and examine the associated ethical issues that inform the portability of teaching qualifications in a global employment market; and

Promote, internationally, the high standards and shared values of the teaching profession, in the interests of the public.

In working towards these goals, the Councils will always seek to support the diversity of students, pupils and teachers. We will seek to work in an inclusive way with other similar bodies around the world, in particular supporting new and emerging Councils to develop appropriate models of professionally-led regulation.

Building on these principles, we pledged ourselves in the Cardiff Commitment last year to:

- set up an international forum of teaching councils with a presence on the world wide web and an associated identity and logo;
- share information of common interest - including about respective teaching council responsibilities, research relevant to teaching, and issues of mutual recognition - by developing templates, populating them and hosting the information on a website or websites;
- develop a 'Charter for Teaching Councils' setting out the principles behind and the responsibilities of teaching councils, in order to help others in the establishment of new professionally-led regulatory bodies;
- and to meet on an international basis biennially.

We pledged to make these commitments a reality and to report progress at the next international conference in 2011.

It is therefore very pleasing indeed to see the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria and the South African Council for Educators being so proactive in making these actions happen in the African continent.

The creation of IFTRA is a logical response by our teaching councils to our globalised world where the flow of human capital across international boundaries has become more pronounced than ever and where nations need to co-operate to make the very best of this flow. IFTRA compliments the aspirations of other world education bodies including the Commonwealth Institute, Education International and the International Labour Organisation. For instance, the teaching councils of IFTRA will have a crucial role to play in the achievement of the 2004 Teacher Recruitment Protocol of the Ministers of Education of Commonwealth Countries. This was aimed at the detrimental effect that uncontrolled teacher migration was having on provider nations' investment in initial teacher education. More than most, you will be aware of the challenges that your great continent faces in providing universal education to all and the associated challenges of training - and retaining - sufficient numbers of teachers to meet that demand.

Teaching Councils are statutorily responsible in our various countries for the registration and licensing of teachers including national and migrant teachers. This also gives teaching councils powerful data which can inform individual governments' policies with regard to teacher training, recruitment and retention. Teaching Councils are charged with the regulation of the conduct and practice of registered teachers; with the promotion of teachers' continuing professional development; and with the quality assurance of initial teacher education especially through the accreditation, monitoring and evaluation of teacher education programmes; among others. These are vital roles that require not only cooperation within nations, but across national borders. But we need to do a lot more within our existing teaching councils working with individual governments to genuinely bring about an international approach to teacher qualifications and regulation. Indeed in 2005, speaking at the first international conference, Gary Brace, Chief Executive of my organisation, posed the fundamental question – *'is it not time to begin considering an international teaching qualification?'.* This is not going to be an easy road – but, through IFTRA, we have at least started to recognise the challenges we face – even if it may take many decades to resolve.

Given the roles and aspirations of IFTRA, this 1st Roundtable of the Teaching Regulatory Authorities in Africa is hugely significant. Last year's international conference in Wales underscored the urgency for all those with an interest in the development of teaching, to create awareness among teacher unions and other stakeholders in their countries to make individual governments aware of the value of establishing teaching councils where they did not yet exist. This is also a major aim of the Commonwealth nations. Nigeria and South Africa have taken the initiative in Africa and it is commendable that both nations have delivered this inaugural African round table event.

The theme of the Roundtable which is **“The Role of the African Nations in the Globalisation of the Teaching Profession”** is apt because it points to the

importance of Africa in world affairs, and particularly, with its teeming population, the challenges it faces in education. Africa more than ever needs to work with other countries in the interests of her people. As a result of this conference, I hope that you will create an impetus in Africa for the creation of more teaching councils that will speak authoritatively for teaching issues in this continent and, as a result, argue Africa's case even more persuasively in the community of nations. The importance of the African voice was underscored by the fact that South Africa will host the 4th IFTRA Biennial World Conference in 2011. I hope that all African countries – those that currently have Teaching Councils and others working towards having theirs – shall all be part of the 2011 Conference to be hosted in this continent.

May I use this opportunity to sincerely thank the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria and the South African Council for Educators for ensuring that this continental summit has happened. Africa can be proud of TRCN and SACE for being the continent's flag-bearers in IFTRA. The two bodies have showed resilience, innovation and commitment in progressing the international teaching agenda and have done much to project the teaching profession in Africa to other continents. For example, IFTRA's commitment to work together to share information of common interest in the field of teachers' professional development has been taken forward by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria. As a first step, information about the different practices and approaches of the teaching councils and governments' worldwide are being gathered to a common template and this information will be hosted on the IFTRA website when it is ready. And, as I have just said, the South Africa Council for Educators is busy in organising next year's international conference.

So on behalf of the International Forum, I also thank the governments and peoples of Nigeria and South Africa for the strong support they have given to the teaching councils in both these nations.

And to all the African countries here, I am delighted at the demonstration of your commitment to the development of the teaching profession by your attendance at this first ever African roundtable conference. I know you will take on the challenge with enthusiasm to chart a collective future for the profession in Africa.

I wish you well in your deliberations and look forward to listening to and contributing to your discussions.

Thank you.