

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Ministers review scholarships success**

A recent survey of 26 national agencies has confirmed the continued importance of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). The survey, conducted by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, covers the period 2006-2009, and concludes that the CSFP has made considerable progress towards the recommendations made by 16CCEM in Cape Town in 2006. The findings will be debated by Ministers on the third day of 17CCEM.

Amongst other findings, the report shows that the number of new awards per year has risen significantly, and the number of students on award reached a record high of 1,837 in 2007-2008, a significant increase on previous years but short of the target of 2,009 set by Ministers in Cape Town. While there has been little progress on the recommendation that the CSFP should develop a stronger mechanism for central coordination, the proposal to establish an endowment fund to mark the anniversary has come to fruition, and will be formally launched by Commonwealth Education Ministers on the opening day of the CCEM. A number of countries also plan to implement the recommendation that the 50th anniversary be marked with suitable events. Nominating agencies continue to value the Plan, and confirm its high standards and relevance, whilst identifying some specific problems that need to be addressed.

Perhaps most significantly, the report cites alumni and evaluation studies that demonstrate the strong capacity of award holders to return to and make a significant impact on their home countries. Some 88% were still working in their home country, primarily in the public sector, with higher education the most popular destination. The Plan also has an outstanding record in producing future leaders, with over 50 Cabinet Ministers, 53 permanent secretaries and 75 university vice-chancellors already identified amongst alumni, even though the sample is limited and biased towards more recent award holders.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the CSFP remains one of the most significant forms of Commonwealth collaboration, and indeed that its impact and importance may well have been underestimated. There is clear potential to expand on these achievements in future. Equally, it needs to be recognised that the precise structures under which the Plan was established in 1959 may not be the optimum ones to respond to this challenge. The report covers in detail the evolution of the plan, statistical analysis of the three years under report, and recommendations for consideration by Ministers at 17CCEM.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) is an international programme under which member governments offer scholarships and fellowships to citizens of other Commonwealth countries. The Plan was established at the first Commonwealth education conference in 1959 and is reviewed by Ministers at their triennial meetings.
2. The survey of national CSFP agencies and the report to 17CCEM were produced by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). The ACU is the oldest

inter-university network in the world, with over 500 members in six continents. The ACU also provides the secretariat for the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom.

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