

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA (CMEC)

FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE
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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 2: CANADIAN EDUCATION - CONTEXT AND SCOPE	7
Context	7
Scope and Education Policy	8
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS FROM CONSULTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS	11
A. The Consultations and Discussions	11
1. Provincial and Territorial Consultations	11
2. Survey of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	12
3. Discussions with Secretariat Staff	14
4. Discussions with Federal Departments and Agencies	14
5. Summary Themes	15
B. Examples of Other Canadian Ministerial Councils	16
C. Educational Arrangements in Other Federations, the European Union, and the OECD	18
CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS	24
A. Setting an Agenda and Work Plan to Achieve CMEC's Strategic Goals	25
B. Defining Roles and Responsibilities	26
Summary of Roles and Responsibilities	31
C. Defining a Relationship with the Federal Government	32
D. Defining a Relationship with NGOs	36
E. Administrative Processes and Mechanisms	36
Summary of Recommendations	38
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY	39
APPENDICES	41
A: Terms of Reference	41
B: Agreed Memorandum on a Council of Ministers of Education, Canada	44
C: Letters and Questionnaires Sent to Ministers, Federal Officials, and NGOs	51
D: Review of CMEC: Analysis of Existing Ministerial Groupings in Canada	57
E: Victoria Declaration 1993	66
F: Victoria Declaration 1999	69
G: Excerpts From: Portrait of Canada	71
H: Education Systems in Other Federations, OECD and the European Union	73

E X E C U T I V E S U M M A R Y

In the spring of 2003, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) decided to seek an external appraisal of its mission, objectives and capabilities in order to establish a framework for the organization's future and a foundation for its renewal. Three external reviewers were retained for this task and were asked to include the following in their report:

- recommendations concerning relationships among CMEC member governments
- recommendations concerning relationships between CMEC and the federal government
- recommendations concerning relationships between CMEC and major national non-governmental organizations
- a review of the specific roles and responsibilities of CMEC and of the CMEC Secretariat

Consultations were conducted with all provinces and territories. By visiting each jurisdiction wherever possible, the reviewers obtained a good sense of the unique challenges and factors each jurisdiction faces as well as the common issues related to education in Canada. Discussions were held with academic and educational experts and federal officials, providing extensive insight into the many challenges facing education in Canada and CMEC as an organization. Mail-in questionnaires were provided to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to obtain their perspective on the review.

The range of consultations and discussions held, and the variety of issues raised during those sessions, makes it difficult to synthesize the points raised. However, there was enough commonality to allow for a summary of several themes, outlined below:

1. All provinces and territories agree there are pan-Canadian issues that need attention and they identified a range of issues not currently being addressed.
2. There is a need for CMEC as a structure to promote information sharing and cooperative action on pan-Canadian issues among the provinces. However, the current organization has become consumed with information sharing.
3. There is a critical need to translate the vision for CMEC (as articulated in the Victoria Declaration) into an action-oriented work plan with specific deliverables. The CMEC agenda needs to focus on a limited number of issues in which the provinces/territories can demonstrate progress and success.
4. There is a need to clarify roles and responsibilities within CMEC — role of the Council, of the Executive, of ACDME, and of the Director-General.
5. There is a need to develop a constructive dialogue with the federal government, a structure for this dialogue, and a mechanism for ongoing communication.

6. There is a need to set up a process to allow NGOs to have input into the policy-making process. However, input should be at the administrative level or through a structured process so it does not overwhelm the Ministers' agenda and focus.
7. The existence of a permanent Secretariat gives CMEC the resources to pursue its agenda and realize its vision.

The reviewers also examined other models of Ministerial cooperation in Canada to determine if their experience could be helpful to CMEC. Circumstances are somewhat different for these Ministerial councils because of provincial jurisdiction in education, but CMEC should consider some of the processes used by the Council of Canadian Ministers of the Environment to advance its agenda.

With regard to the international models for educational cooperation that were examined in other federations, the OECD, and the European Union, there is limited application of those models to the Canadian situation. OECD provides a venue for cooperation by choice, and through cooperative work, policy options for independent judgement by each member country. In that sense, OECD's work on education, which involved establishment of a strategic and focused agenda, could provide a model for the way in which Canadian provinces could work together in CMEC. OECD provides no model, however, for how provinces and a federal authority could work together.

Based on issues and concerns raised with reviewers during consultations in the various jurisdictions, an examination of current issues facing education in Canada and an analysis of research on international and Canadian models of Ministerial cooperation, the reviewers examined CMEC's mission and mandate to determine if any changes are required. The reviewers concluded the mandate statement contained in the 1967 Memorandum (MOU) that created CMEC is certainly broad enough to cover a wide range of activities for the Council. Furthermore, there do not appear to be any limitations to action in the MOU. As such, the mission and mandate contained in the current MOU seem appropriate and adequate to give the Council full scope for future activities.

A change of wording in the mission/mandate of the Council is not required, but the reviewers are recommending a change in the emphasis and activities of CMEC — to cooperation and action. The challenge is to find a more effective way to realize that mandate and mission, faced with the kinds of structural obstacles that are a natural, and perhaps unavoidable, by-product of the thirteen-jurisdiction organization. CMEC has clearly articulated a vision for the organization in the Victoria Declaration, but has not been able to make consistent progress to realize that vision.

The reviewers recommend changes in five areas that could move CMEC towards realizing its vision:

- A. Setting an agenda and work plan to achieve CMEC's strategic goals
- B. Defining roles and responsibilities
- C. Defining a relationship with the federal government
- D. Defining relationships with NGOs
- E. Administrative processes and mechanisms

Chapter 4 of the report contains detailed recommendations in these five areas, with comments on setting priorities and implementing the recommendations. An outline of roles and responsibilities of all levels of the organization has also been suggested. Following is a summary of the recommendations:

1. CMEC should define an agenda to give meaning and application to the vision articulated by Ministers in the Victoria Declaration.
2. CMEC needs to define an agenda for activities in the international arena.
3. The agenda must be accompanied by a work plan with specific objectives, deliverables, and timelines.
4. CMEC should adopt new processes for these tasks (#1 and #2), including a special priority-setting meeting of Ministers and Deputies to define the agenda.
5. CMEC should engage Premiers, either through the Annual Premiers' Conference or the Council of the Federation, by seeking their endorsement of the agenda and by providing Premiers with regular progress reports.
6. CMEC needs to develop a communications strategy to profile its agenda with the public and education stakeholders.
7. CMEC work plans and progress reports should be available to the public through the website.
8. Roles and responsibilities in the organization need to be clarified.
9. CMEC should establish an ongoing mechanism for engaging the federal government in dialogue and collaboration on the education agenda.
10. CMEC should establish a process for engaging NGOs in policy discussions related to CMEC's agenda.
11. Meeting agendas should be carefully managed to ensure they reflect the Ministers' agenda.
12. Once the agenda and work plan have been determined, the Secretariat should be reviewed to ensure it has the appropriate resources and staff to implement the work plan.

The reviewers feel that, in order for CMEC to fulfill its mandate, there are three priorities to address as soon as possible:

1. Develop an action-oriented agenda, based on the vision articulated in the Victoria Declaration, including a work plan with specific objectives and timelines

2. Seek the Premiers' endorsement for the agenda and provide regular reports on progress to the Annual Premiers' Council or the Council of the Federation
3. Decide on an option to engage the federal government in a dialogue on potential collaborative areas

Administrative and organizational issues should be dealt with after these steps to ensure administration changes support the strategic goals and objectives.

It is a crucial time for leadership in education in Canada. The country, from an international perspective, invests a high level of funding in education and has comparatively high levels of participation in education and relatively high overall educational attainment rates. However, evidence shows that Canada's relative position is slipping. There is concern among all the jurisdictions and the general public that pan-Canadian issues need collective attention and action before the country loses more ground in its educational performance.

CHAPTER ONE

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) is a voluntary grouping of the Ministers responsible for education in the provinces and territories of Canada. It was created in 1967 through the approval of the Agreed Memorandum (MOU) on a Council of Ministers of Education, Canada by all the provincial governments. The territories became members in the 1990s.

According to the Agreed Memorandum,

The purposes of the Council are to enable the ministers to consult on such matters as are of common interest, to provide a means for the fullest possible cooperation among Provincial and Territorial Member governments in areas of mutual interest and concern in education and to cooperate with other Educational organizations to promote the development of education in Canada.

In the spring of 2003, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada decided to seek an external appraisal of its mission, objectives and capabilities in order to establish a framework for the organization's future and a foundation for its renewal. CMEC proposed a formal review within the following parameters:

Whereas provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education and higher education have collectively agreed to review the mission, mandates, powers and structure of CMEC at both the political and administrative levels;

Whereas education and higher education are within the jurisdiction of provinces and territories, this review is founded on the underlying basic principle that the ministers responsible must collectively exercise strong leadership at both the pan-Canadian and international levels, and their leadership role must be recognized by the general public and by governments, including the federal government.

The Ministers requested that a panel of three experts conduct consultations with all Ministers of education and higher education or their designates, and with Deputy Ministers, CMEC Secretariat staff and related officials as required. The terms of reference (Appendix A) mandated the reviewers to collect information and opinions from stakeholder audiences, such as national education-related non-governmental organizations (NGOs), federal officials, and labour market Ministers. The reviewers were also requested to examine similar organizations in other international jurisdictions to determine if there are practices or arrangements that could profitably be applied to CMEC.

It was noted that, in particular, the experts should include:

- recommendations concerning relationships among CMEC member governments
- recommendations concerning relationships between CMEC and the federal government
- recommendations concerning relationships between CMEC and major national non-governmental organizations
- a review of the specific roles and responsibilities of CMEC and of the CMEC Secretariat

The review team was comprised of one international and two Canadian experts. The reviewers, individually or collectively, met with all provinces and territories, usually with the Ministers, followed by a meeting with the Deputies and senior staff on details or administrative questions. The meeting format followed themes outlined in questionnaires sent prior to these meetings. A separate questionnaire was also sent to 27 non-governmental organizations and 13 replied with written comments.

Since the question of federal-provincial relations was a key issue identified by a number of jurisdictions, the reviewers decided to meet with four federal government agencies: Intergovernmental Affairs (Privy Council), Human Resources Development Canada, Department of Foreign and International Trade, and Canadian Heritage. A meeting with Industry Canada was sought but could not be scheduled. A series of questions was provided to participants to guide discussions. Appendix C contains the letters and questionnaires used in all the consultations and discussions.

Besides these formal meetings and consultations, the review team researched other models of inter-provincial cooperation within Canada as well as international models of educational cooperation in other federations, the European Union, and the OECD.

The report provides an overview of the current context for Canadian education and a brief discussion on the scope of education policy in Canada in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 gives a report on the consultations and discussions conducted in the fall of 2003, with particular emphasis on the discussions held with the provincial/territorial jurisdictions. It also contains the results of the review of other Ministerial councils in Canada and international models of cooperation. Chapter 4 outlines a series of recommendations on: the mission and mandate of CMEC; roles and responsibilities for various functions and positions; federal/provincial/territorial and NGO relations; and ways to achieve CMEC's strategic goals. Chapter 5 synthesizes the recommendations in light of the current Canadian political environment and raises some key implementation issues for CMEC.

The intent of this report is to provide perspective on CMEC's current mission, mandate, and organization in view of current issues and challenges. The report provides recommendations for CMEC to meet the challenges in education in Canada in the coming years.

CANADIAN EDUCATION - CONTEXT AND SCOPE

A. Context

It has become almost an article of faith around the world that education is a key factor in determining future prospects for social, cultural, and economic development. This is particularly well understood in Canada, with an economy that is heavily trade-dependent and a society that is geographically mobile and culturally diverse. While Canada has historically prospered because of its rich base of natural resources, the rapid transformation of the world's economy as a result of technological change has also transformed the Canadian economy. The impact of technology on communications, transportation, and modes of production has fashioned a global marketplace, and changed the relative balance among the traditional factors of production in favour of the value of human capital (knowledge and skills), as opposed to monetary capital and natural resources. Knowledge-generated productivity has become a major factor in determining the distribution of wealth among the nations of the world. In this context, the importance of education has increased significantly.

OECD analysis of economic growth during the 1990s showed that rising labour productivity accounted for at least half of GDP per capita growth in most OECD countries. Human capital provides an essential contribution. The estimated long-term effect on economic output of one additional year of education in the OECD area is in the order of six per cent. (OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2003)

Education is not simply a question of economics. Just as changes in communications technology and transportation have profoundly transformed the world's economy, over the past half-century they have also had a tremendous impact on societies and cultures. Canada, forged from two major European cultures that settled a land occupied for millennia by a diverse Aboriginal population, has grown through immigration, resulting in one of the most culturally diverse populations and cultures in the world. This diversity has been an undoubted source of strength for Canada, but it also presents challenges. Canada's education systems play a major role in facilitating and shaping the balance required to maintain healthy roots for the two official linguistic cultures in Canada, along with a growing openness to inclusive diversity in the global community and within Canadian society.

In Canada, education has increasingly become a matter of high public profile and priority. The growing complexity of society and the economy has come to require increasing levels of skills and knowledge on the part of individuals and society as a whole. Education has long been valued in Canada, as a means of providing equitable access to the standard of living and quality of life aspired to by most Canadians. This value is clearly reflected in terms of educational attainment, where Canada has long ranked high. It is fifth among the 30 OECD countries in terms of the percentage of population aged 55 – 64 having college or university education — an indication of the way things were 30 – 40 years ago. Canada has sustained this high level, ranking third in the percentage of the population aged 25 – 34 having attained

this level of education. In the attainment of upper-secondary education, Canada also ranks high among OECD countries — seventh for 55 – 64 year-olds and eighth for 25 – 34 year-olds. (OECD, *Education at a Glance*)

In terms of quality of education, Canada also performs well. Among OECD countries in the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Canadian 15-year-olds ranked second in reading literacy, third (with five others) in mathematical literacy, and fourth (with four others) in scientific literacy. (OECD, *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*)

Canada has been among the world's leaders in adapting to, and adopting, the new model of lifelong learning, in which the older “lockstep” model of school, work, retirement, has been replaced by frequent job and career changes, recurrent learning, and “re-skilling.” This is demonstrated by the rise in average or median age of post-secondary learners, and by the increase in part-time learning.

The value placed upon education is also reflected in the public and private resources directed to educational activities in Canada. In terms of public expenditures, education is second only to health care. In terms of investment in education as a percentage of GDP, Canada, however, has slipped to eleventh in 2000 from fourth in 1995 and first in 1990 among OECD countries (OECD 2001). Expenditure as a percentage of GDP tells only part of the story since countries differ in GDP per capita. In actual expenditures per secondary student, Canada ranked sixteenth among the 26 OECD countries for which data were available in 2000. In terms of research, Canada ranks ninth among OECD nations in total domestic expenditures as a percentage of GDP for 2000. (OECD, *Education at a Glance 2001*)

While participation and attainment rates in education have risen sharply over the past half-century in Canada, it remains the case that access is still unevenly distributed among the population, with some groups still lagging behind the Canadian average. In an economy and society where education is increasingly important, these differential rates of participation and attainment become more and more problematic from the perspective of social equity.

B. Scope of Education Policy

When the Dominion of Canada was founded in 1867, jurisdiction for education was assigned to the provinces. In large part, this was done to protect the religious and linguistic rights of French-Canadians. In the ensuing years, the role of education as a factor in social and economic life has burgeoned. Not only has elementary and secondary education become universal, but so too has access to post-secondary education become the “expectation,” if not the formal right, of the overwhelming majority of Canadian families. The growth of the elementary/secondary system was dramatic through the first decades of the twentieth century. The growth of the post-secondary system occurred following World War II, and with the maturation of the baby boom generation starting in the 1960s.

The assignment of education as a provincial jurisdiction helps to ensure that local concerns and regional differences can be adequately reflected in policy and programs. As the Council of Ministers stated in their 1999 Victoria Declaration, each provincial government places a high value on “developing and adapting education policies for the needs of regions and communities, and on administering programs at the local level, close to the people served by the education systems.” This is why many provincial governments delegate a wide span of control to local authorities.

The Victoria Declaration also notes “youth unemployment, the development of a knowledge economy, economic globalization, and technological advances are having an impact on our daily lives, as well as the job market.” The impact may be manifested differently in each jurisdiction, but some challenges are common across all jurisdictions. This reality compels provinces and territories to work together in a cooperative manner.

Recognition of the desirability, even the necessity, of cooperative and collaborative efforts, has given rise to a series of pan-Canadian priorities and initiatives across jurisdictions. These range from high-level statements of policy objectives, principles, and priorities, such as the Victoria Declaration, to very practical projects and programs, such as: a collective work on a common framework for science learning outcomes; and the measurement of educational results in a pan-Canadian and international context through the Student Achievement Indicators Project (SAIP) and the OECD Program for International Student Achievement (PISA). There has been collaboration in the joint development of positions on such issues as official languages protocols and copyright law.

The increasing “reach” of previously local or pan-Canadian issues to the global context has also resulted in increased participation of Canadian jurisdictions in international organizations such as OECD and UNESCO. Canadian participation provides further opportunities for input and exchange on educational issues experienced in common around the world. Because of provincial jurisdiction in education, CMEC is the official Canadian voice in such international meetings dealing with education.

In the pan-Canadian context, the scope of education policy and programs has grown exponentially. There is recognition of the centrality of education and learning to social, cultural, and economic interests of individuals, provinces, and Canada as a whole. Education is not a self-contained, isolated set of programs that only reflect and respond to local interests and issues. Education has other critical goals, such as mobility, productivity, innovation, a skilled and adaptable labour force, mutual cultural respect and understanding, and social equity.

One of the implications of this complex interaction of issues and fields of activity is that the federal government, while having no constitutional role in education *per se*, has come to play a role in areas that have a significant impact, both direct and indirect, on education. Ottawa has exercised its constitutional authority over unemployment insurance, for example, to mount programs that provide

assistance to unemployed workers to upgrade their labour market skills. The constitutional provisions regarding official languages have led Ottawa to provide funding to provinces for minority first language and second official language programs in schools across Canada. A number of programs have been instituted to assist Aboriginal students to participate in education, both at the elementary/secondary level and the post-secondary level.

Ottawa's general interest in providing better opportunities to economically and socially disadvantaged Canadians — an interest it shares with provinces — has led to federal funding for student financial assistance and tax expenditures. The federal interest in the economy has led to a series of initiatives aimed at economic innovation, such as major funding for basic and applied research through granting councils. In addition, Ottawa's activities in immigration, international trade and commerce, and intellectual property, have resulted in federal legislation and programming that have a substantial impact on provincial educational programs and priorities.

It is against this backdrop of extensive, if somewhat confused and unstable relationships, that CMEC made an encompassing visionary statement in the Victoria Declaration (1999) that summarizes the scope and impact of education in Canada:

We believe that education is a lifelong learning process and that we must continue to strive to create a learning society in which the acquisition, renewal, and use of knowledge are cherished. We also believe that the future of our society depends on informed and educated citizens who, while fulfilling their own goals of personal and professional development, also contribute to social and economic progress. On the international scene, our activities should reflect these values and our priorities, while contributing to strengthening our role globally. Above all, we want all citizens to have a fair and equitable opportunity in whatever educational and training endeavours they may pursue.

Recent polling of public opinion in Canada demonstrates that Canadians share the Ministers' conviction that education is a critical issue for Canadians. The 2003 Portraits of Canada, released by Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) in October 2003, identified health, education and federal/provincial/territorial relations as the top three priorities in every province and territory. The poll reported that 69 per cent of Canadians think increased funding of education and training should be a priority for the new Prime Minister. Although education has not had the spotlight on it that health has had in the past few years, education is obviously a priority for all Canadians.

CHAPTER THREE

**R E S U L T S F R O M C O N S U L T A T I O N S A N D
D I S C U S S I O N S**

A. The Consultations and Discussions

The consultations conducted with all provinces and territories, as well as discussions held with academic and educational experts and federal officials, provided extensive insight into the many challenges facing education in Canada and CMEC as an organization. The comments from NGOs, provided through the mail-in questionnaires, were also very useful in obtaining external perspectives on CMEC. By visiting each jurisdiction wherever possible, the reviewers obtained a good sense of the unique challenges and factors each jurisdiction faces, as well as common issues related to education in Canada. The discussions, without exception, dealt substantively with a range of conceptual, policy, and administrative/organizational topics. Following are details from the consultations and discussions held in the fall of 2003.

1. PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CONSULTATIONS:

Comments on mission and mandate – All jurisdictions strongly support the need for significant interprovincial and territorial cooperation in education through a pan-Canadian organization. With the key role education plays in the emergence of the knowledge-based economy and in complex societal issues, the need for dialogue, exchange of best practices, and development of educational policy in a pan-Canadian context is seen as essential. Consequently, jurisdictions agree that the role of CMEC, as broadly defined in the Agreed Memorandum, is still pertinent.

Most jurisdictions feel CMEC needs to become the recognized leader in education in Canada; its voice should be prominent on educational matters and its expertise valued. Most provinces and territories argue that, if strong political leadership is not achieved at this juncture, other players will likely fill the void very quickly, both in the private sector and at the federal level. Many jurisdictions offered the opinion that this is already happening.

The provinces/territories point out that, with unsynchronized electoral cycles, there has been constant change at the CMEC table, and to a lesser extent, at the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME) table. This has resulted in short-term corporate memory that is a challenge for the organization and impacts the operation of the Council.

Provinces/territories feel that CMEC's activities should demonstrate a value-added benefit for the jurisdictions. The Council should not attempt to duplicate what provinces and territories do well or what other pan-Canadian or regional organizations are doing effectively. The OECD Education Committee is mentioned as a model for making sure the focus remains on policy. The Committee's provision of relevant research material assists members in the development of their educational policies.

Comments on agendas – All jurisdictions state that the Council needs a clear, focused, and action-oriented public agenda. They feel Ministers need to take control of that agenda and demonstrate progress toward clear deliverables. All commented that CMEC is mostly reactive and project driven at the current time and, overwhelmingly, jurisdictions see the need to move to a more strategic agenda.

On a more practical level, there appears to be widespread dissatisfaction with present meeting formats, agendas that tend to be the same for ACDME as for CMEC, long and administrative briefing books, and an unending paper flow. A number of jurisdictions feel the “show and tell” section of the agenda is not productive and a better means for information exchange on best practices needs to be found. Several jurisdictions identify a need to rebalance the agenda between primary-secondary and post-secondary issues.

Comments on relationships – CMEC’s relationship with the federal government was consistently raised by all jurisdictions. The vast majority of jurisdictions feel that CMEC needs to engage the federal government on its education agenda. A number of jurisdictions strongly believe that CMEC’s lack of interaction with the federal government has handicapped its ability to develop a pan-Canadian agenda. They feel that both society and the education agenda have changed over the last 30 years and new realities must be taken into account. It is strongly suggested that a means to encourage a more open and positive dialogue with the federal government, while respecting exclusive provincial jurisdiction in education, is required.

Finally, it is generally felt that CMEC should not attempt to be a research institute, as it does not have the staff or the budget to do so. However, CMEC needs to foster close links with existing research institutes and funding agencies in Canada to promote CMEC’s priorities.

Comments on the Secretariat – Virtually all jurisdictions support the need for a permanent Secretariat, but want a Secretariat that is more policy oriented and less process oriented. They identified the need for the Secretariat to work more closely with the provinces in setting an appropriate agenda and keeping attention focused on strategic issues.

2. SURVEY OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs):

Feedback from NGOs was very mixed, with a wide range of differing views. This is not surprising, given the diverse spectrum of organizations that were invited to provide input into the review. Questionnaires were mailed out to 27 organizations and responses were received from 13.

Generally speaking, non-governmental organizations endorse the role and mandate of CMEC and view the Council as a necessary and valuable mechanism. They see the Council as being important in terms of:

- bringing the jurisdictions together on issues of mutual concern
- articulating pan-Canadian perspectives on educational issues
- facilitating pan-Canadian and international assessments

However, most NGO respondents suggest a broader and more ambitious mandate for CMEC. They feel the Council needs to articulate a pan-Canadian education agenda and actively profile education as the cornerstone of social and economic development. Some NGOs are very critical of CMEC's track record to date. They cite lack of progress on such issues as mobility of students, training of teachers, native education, and minority language education. Comments included: "If provincial and territorial governments want to ensure that their constitutional jurisdiction is fully respected, they must demonstrate a capacity to act together in Canada's interest" and "For CMEC to be truly effective it must prove that Canada is ... greater than the sum of its parts."

There is particular concern about CMEC's lack of strong support of public education. Some are critical of CMEC's perceived "support" of private education and feel that CMEC should extract itself from relationships with the private education sector. There is no consensus on this issue as others feel labour and business should be actively engaged in the education agenda.

To the question, "Do you think CMEC is presently playing a leadership role in education in Canada?" most NGOs are unsure. Many NGOs do not know much about CMEC, some are aware of the organization, while others are aware of certain of its accomplishments such as the Copyright Consortium and the Francophone minority language projects. Some were very critical: "We hear a lot through the media about discord and protectionist attitudes between provinces" and "CMEC has not made any appreciable contribution to the pan-Canadian dialogue on student debt, tuition fees, academic freedom, or core funding." A couple of the respondents think CMEC should not play a leadership role as "Too many pan-Canadian processes bog down in the need for consensus." And finally some feel that CMEC's leadership role is adequately demonstrated through such projects as the national and international assessments of student achievement.

Most NGOs are very critical of CMEC for not engaging the federal government. Some express surprise at the absence of any reference to the federal government in the mandate statement. They emphasize that expectations of the NGOs and the general public for federal/provincial/territorial collaboration in education are high. Many NGO respondents encourage serious consideration to adding a reference to federal/provincial/territorial cooperation in a renewed mandate. One organization stated: "We understand the sensitivities with respect to federal intrusion in provincial jurisdiction, but the federal government has assisted historically with the funding of CMEC. From the point of view of students, parents, and taxpayers, it is the result that counts." Other NGOs think that "federal-level issues would benefit from the development of common strategies and action to ensure that federal legislative, policy, and financial initiatives that impact on education are dealt with in a coherent manner."

On the international scene, NGOs agree that CMEC has played and needs to play an important leadership role by representing Canada effectively and efficiently at international events and in international programs. Concern was expressed that Canada tends to be a mute participant in international conferences, unable to contribute significantly to debates without consulting 13 different jurisdictions on everything. Several NGOs commented that the lack of a clear pan-Canadian education agenda means other federations are better equipped than Canada to “punch their weight” in international educational discussions.

Finally, most NGOs would like to have a closer rapport with CMEC. They feel it is important for CMEC to share information on its agenda and its priorities. NGOs want to be engaged in and consulted on broad policy questions. Although some would like to sit at the table in the decision-making process, most want only to be informed and consulted. Some NGOs regret that the education forums have been abandoned and suggest that “CMEC should implement a more structured process whereby NGOs in the education sector can participate in the development of CMEC priorities and activities.”

3. DISCUSSIONS WITH SECRETARIAT STAFF:

Secretariat staff expressed concern that CMEC is presently at an impasse and they strongly support the present CMEC review. They would like to see roles and responsibilities clarified to address current confusion in the organization. They are strongly committed to the development of a pan-Canadian agenda for education in Canada and would like to support the development of a new policy-oriented CMEC agenda. They also emphasize the need for provinces to rise above individual jurisdictional concerns in the pursuit of common objectives.

Many staff raised the issue of current financial resources. Staff feel that much time is spent juggling relatively small project budgets. Reliance on federal funding (about 50 per cent of CMEC’s budget comes from federal sources) has a definite impact on the agenda and projects that are undertaken, which often reflect availability of federal funding rather than the Council’s agenda.

4. DISCUSSIONS WITH FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES:

The reviewers met with officials from Intergovernmental Affairs (Privy Council), Human Resources Development Canada, Department of Foreign and International Trade, and Canadian Heritage. The federal officials indicated their willingness to establish a dialogue with a pan-Canadian table of Ministers responsible for education. Indeed, there was a clear frustration expressed at the lack of such a forum. Federal officials feel the current policy environment in education and the need to nurture a culture of lifelong learning compels the provinces/territories and the federal government to work together on issues of common concern. They cite the ad hoc ADM Working Group on Student Financial Assistance as a good example of a collaborative federal/provincial/territorial approach that has benefited both orders of government.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) offered that provinces should try to develop a more comprehensive approach to international education marketing to maximize Canadian opportunities, given the incredible potential in the international market. Also, it is felt that provinces and territories need to harmonize certain procedures to avoid potentially serious problems, such as illegal immigration or bogus Canadian educational institutions.

5. SUMMARY THEMES:

The range of consultations and discussions held, and the variety of issues raised during those sessions, makes it difficult to synthesize. However, several themes emerged and a summary is outlined below:

- 1. All provinces and territories agree there are pan-Canadian issues that need attention and they identified a range of issues that are not currently being addressed.*
- 2. There is a need for CMEC to promote information sharing and cooperative action on pan-Canadian issues among the provinces. However, the current organization has become consumed with information sharing.*
- 3. There is a critical need to translate the vision for CMEC (as articulated in the Victoria Declaration) into an action-oriented work plan with specific deliverables. The CMEC agenda needs to focus on a limited number of issues in which the provinces/territories can demonstrate progress and success.*
- 4. There is a need to clarify roles and responsibilities within CMEC — role of the Council, of the Executive, of ACDME, and of the Director-General.*
- 5. There is a need to develop constructive dialogue with the federal government, a structure for this dialogue, and a mechanism for ongoing communication.*
- 6. There is a need to set up a process to allow NGOs to have input into the policy-making process. However, input should be at the administrative level or through a structured process, so it does not overwhelm the Ministers' agenda and focus.*
- 7. The existence of a permanent Secretariat gives CMEC the resources to pursue its agenda and realize its vision.*

The degree of consensus about this list was surprising. Another issue raised was recognition that the environment in which CMEC operates is not a particularly easy one. The continuous turnover of membership, at both the Ministerial and Deputy level, brings a degree of instability to the organization and a need to constantly orient new members to an understanding of the nature of the organization, its work, and its priorities. There is a need to “confirm” the organization on an almost ongoing basis as membership turns over, making it a difficult environment for progress.

B. Examples of Other Canadian Ministerial Councils:

The reviewers also examined other models of Ministerial cooperation in Canada to determine if their experience could be helpful to CMEC. Appendix D has a summary of several Councils and outlines their mandates, membership, activities and administrative arrangements. Two models were examined more closely as they were mentioned several times during the provincial consultations — the Forum of Labour Market Ministers and the Council of Ministers of the Environment.

The Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) – The Forum of Labour Market Ministers was established in 1983 to promote interjurisdictional cooperation on labour market issues and to provide a forum to establish common goals. It promotes a highly skilled workforce with portable qualifications and provides a link to participatory structures, such as the Labour Force Development Boards. It is a federal-provincial table, co-chaired by the federal government (HRDC). The lead province houses the Secretariat (a lead-province coordinator, a policy analyst, and an administrative assistant) during its two-year mandate.

Several task teams have been formed within FLMM to address labour market issues, including a Labour Mobility Coordinating Group, formed to coordinate implementation of the Labour Mobility Chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Many of the post-secondary Ministers of Education also participate in FLMM. When asked about the model, many expressed frustration at the lack of progress on key issues. The rotating Secretariat was seen as creating problems because of the lack of continuity and the differing capacity of provinces to add extra staff effort when assuming the lead-province position. Finally, aspects of the agenda for this group tend to be more technical in nature than those facing CMEC.

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) – CCME works to promote effective intergovernmental cooperation and coordinated approaches to interjurisdictional issues related to the environment. CCME members collectively set nationally consistent environmental standards, strategies, and objectives. Environment Canada is a member of the Council. Consensus decision making is a basic operating principle but each jurisdiction decides whether or not to adopt CCME proposals and standards.

The Council meets at least once a year, and between meetings, a Deputy Ministers' Committee and a Secretariat manage the work of the Council. The size of the Secretariat has varied from a low of one or two in the early 1980s to a high of 17 in the 1990s, with the current size of eight staff (Executive Director, Director of Corporate Services, three coordinators, one program officer, and two administrative assistants.)

CCME seems to have accomplished a great deal in a relatively short period of time and has managed to define clear pan-Canadian standards in a number of areas. Its successes are attributed to the very strong pressures brought by public opinion on federal and provincial governments to act jointly in the environment sector. Furthermore, members claim the presence of the federal government at the table has allowed some very frank and open discussions that have helped move the agenda forward in a coordinated fashion. Federal resources were also instrumental in achieving the agenda. Finally, because of the highly technical nature of the subject, the Secretariat is able to draw on experts in a timely fashion through use of contracts.

CMEC may be able to consider some of the processes adopted by CCME that have allowed that group to make significant progress in the accomplishment of its objectives. In 2000/01, CCME undertook a strategic review of its past accomplishments, current work, and future challenges to set its future direction. Concerned that their agenda be both strategic and practical in providing leadership in the environmental area, the Council of Ministers identified a three-year business plan, which included key strategic issues, key deliverables, and associated activities. A reporting format was developed to manage and track progress on the implementation of the business plan.

There are some obvious differences between CMEC and CCME — the jurisdiction of the provinces in education and the less technical nature of the agenda — but the processes adopted by CCME to advance their agenda are worth consideration. For example, the Business Plan Guidelines for CCME are reproduced below to illustrate the criteria used by CCME. Similar guidelines, relevant to CMEC, could be developed to guide the CMEC agenda.

Given the multitude of potential environmental issues to be dealt with, CCME needs to focus its attention on a limited number of initiatives. In selecting work to engage in collectively, CCME considers a number of criteria, such as:

- *they respond to Ministers' priorities and directions*
- *they provide ministers with a forward-looking, strategic agenda that includes broader and cross-cutting issues*
- *they are, where possible, measurable and results oriented*
- *wherever possible, actions directly contribute to an environmental protection and sustainable development result*
- *they are easily understood and consider stakeholder interests*

The Council of Ministers will continue to define its work to ensure the proper alignment between strategic directions and organizational actions.

The CCME business plan is published on a website, fully outlining accomplishments for each fiscal year and targeted areas for upcoming years. There is extensive use of working groups, tasked with specific areas of the work plan, to advance their agenda.

CCME has also been confronted with some of the same challenges as CMEC. Its 2001 strategic plan identified a number of challenges:

- Continuity and flexibility of the Ministerial table, and to a lesser extent of the Deputy Ministers' table
- Difficulty in maintaining a sustained level of enthusiasm and direction over a 5- to 10-year commitment
- Changing priorities of the political environment
- Difficulty in a collaborative model to identify successes that individual Ministers can present to the electorate

These challenges encountered by the Council of Environment Ministers are very similar to those experienced by CMEC, some which may be endemic to the Canadian political environment where provinces/territories have significant jurisdiction, but face the challenges of finding a way to collectively pursue issues.

C. Educational Arrangements in Other Federations, the European Union, and the OECD

GERMANY

Germany is a federal system with responsibility for education at the provincial (Länder) level, except in a few respects where the Basic Law explicitly gives responsibility to the federal level. These federal responsibilities include only the general principles of higher education, in-company vocational education and training, training assistance, legal protection of students in correspondence courses, regulations on entry to the legal, medical and paramedical professions, and the setting of salaries and pensions for teachers, since they are civil servants. The provinces are responsible for pre-school, school, higher education, and adult and continuing education in all other respects.

In this constitutional context, the provinces seek to work together on supra-regional issues in education and the federal government seeks to engage with the provincial governments on issues of national concern that bear upon the quality of education and its links with other social and economic policies.

The **German Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)** is like CMEC in that it has only provincial Ministers as members. Unlike Canada, there is a federal Minister of Education (and Research) who participates in KMK meetings only as a guest and not on all occasions. The KMK was established to achieve sufficient harmonization of education throughout Germany to facilitate mobility of individuals within the country for professional and personal purposes. KMK deals with policy issues in school and higher education, research and cultural affairs that are

supra-provincial and seeks a common view. Decisions require consensus and implementation requires provincial action, including legislative action where necessary.

In pursuit of this objective, the provincial Ministers have negotiated agreement on a diverse range of issues: common structures for the school systems; common age of commencement and duration of full-time schooling; starting and ending dates for the school year and duration of school holidays; designation of educational institutions; recognition of examinations; and scales for reporting of student results. Recent decisions cover: standards required for German, mathematics, and foreign languages; structure of upper-secondary education; teacher education; and mutual recognition of teachers.

The **German Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion** (BLK) was established to be the vehicle through which cooperation between the federal and provincial authorities on education could be achieved. Its membership includes the provincial and federal education Ministers and the other federal Ministers whose responsibilities interact with education policy (e.g., economy, employment), but only a few provincial Ministers typically attend.

The BLK's work on education has focused on innovations, such as the use of media in higher education, the promotion of women in science, the development of strategies to facilitate disadvantaged, school leavers, and the development of the regional role of vocational education institutions.

Outside these formal arrangements, the federal government intervenes using its capacity to provide finance to support initiatives. Such initiatives can proceed only if cooperation can be negotiated with the Länder authorities, which often includes cooperation in funding the initiative. Examples of federal initiatives are: promotion of an extension of the time students spend at school through a project on whole-day schools, and an expansion of lifelong learning developed through the promotion of learning regions in which education and training policies are linked closely with other social and economic policies and the relevant institution are encouraged to work together.

There is a reluctance of provincial Ministers to engage with their federal authorities, much as there is in Canada, in order to protect their constitutional responsibility for education and despite there being an explicit counterpart in the role of federal Minister of Education.

The German model does not offer anything essentially different for Canada except for a second body in which both provincial and federal ministers are members (but which few provincial ministers attend).

AUSTRALIA

In Australia, education is constitutionally the responsibility of the states but the federal government has assumed a growing role, though one that varies across the three broad levels of the education system: schooling, vocational education and training, and higher education. The federal government assumed

essentially full responsibility for higher education in the 1970s and has exercised a growing role in vocational education and training as part of its concern about workforce development. At the school level, the federal government also exercises a growing role through its membership in national education councils with the states and through funding of specific initiatives.

The Australian Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

(MCEETYA) – The functions of this Australian Ministerial Council include: coordination of strategic policy at the national level; negotiation and development of national agreements on shared objectives and interests (including principles for Australian government/state relations) in the Council’s areas of responsibility; negotiations on scope and format of national reporting on areas of responsibility; sharing of information and collaborative use of resources towards agreed objectives and priorities; and coordination of communication with, and collaboration between, related national structures.

This Council and its role have developed in a constitutional context similar to Canada, with education constitutionally the responsibility of the states and territories, not the federal government. The role of the Australian federal government in education has grown in the last 50 years. It now has a strong federal Department of Education, for example. The growth in influence occurred first in higher education, where the federal government now provides essentially all public funding and exercises essentially sole responsibility. It occurred next in schooling, where the federal government now provides important, though marginal, funding for government schools and substantial funding for non-government schools. It occurred more recently in vocational education and training, driven largely by federal interest in workforce development. Federal influence and funding are substantial in this sector, but through a blurring of the distinction between the vocational education and training sector and both the secondary and higher education sectors, federal influence at school level has increased.

Some collaboration in Australia involves only the states, but the most important collaboration involves state and federal Ministers and Ministries. State and federal Ministers have, for example, developed common and agreed national goals for schooling; national curriculum frameworks for broad curriculum areas; national policies on the education of girls, indigenous students, and adults and on the quality of teaching and learning in Australian universities; and a national qualifications framework. State and federal Ministers and the Australian Bureau of Statistics conduct an annual census of schools, students, staff, and educational expenditure and produce an *Annual National Report on Schooling* to report on success in meeting the goals for schooling.

The Council is supported by a small, national Secretariat headed by a Secretary. The Secretary does not speak or negotiate on behalf of the Council. Statements are made by Ministers, with the media typically attending more to statements by the federal Minister.

It seems unlikely that this model would be appropriate for the Canadian context. First, the states have a stronger role than Canadian provinces because there are no school districts with responsibility below the

level of the states. Secondly, the Australian model involves a much more substantial role for the federal government than is likely to be acceptable in Canada. In any case, it has taken more than 40 years to move from a position similar to the current Canadian one to the current Australian model. The development and the collaboration have often been controversial and negotiations have frequently been tough, but the result is a national perspective on education, including areas of education in which the states remain the primary movers.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the U.S., responsibility for education is reserved to the states in essentially the same way as it is in the federal systems of Germany, Australia, and Canada. The U.S. is like Canada, and unlike Germany and Australia, in having considerable responsibility allocated below the state level to school districts.

There is no equivalent in the U.S. of Canada's CMEC, Australia's MCEETYA, or Germany's KMK. There is a U.S. **Education Commission of the States** (ECS) in which states are represented by their governor and five others, who typically include the chief state school officer, legislators, education officials, and business leaders. This body does not seek to reach policy consensus or to determine national views, but rather seeks to facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences. There is also a **Council of Chief State School Officers** (CCSSO) that brings together the public officials who lead the state and territory departments responsible for primary and secondary education. Like ECS, CCSSO facilitates information sharing, some of it addressing current federal initiatives, some of it addressing issues that have become important on the national scene in their own right.

The federal government works directly with states, not through either of these representative bodies, though it does engage with them on specific projects and does fund some of their work. The federal government is formally restricted in some legislative provisions from taking any action that controls curriculum, achievement standards and assessments, or program of instruction. While this preserves formal state responsibility for these issues, the federal government is not without substantial influence. It exercises this influence by sharpening public debate about educational quality and practice, and by funding particular programs in ways that require compliance with program requirements. The federal role is exercised through a federal Department of Education.

While the Canadian and U.S. systems are quite similar in their constitutional arrangements, they differ in two important respects. At the simplest level, there is a federal department in the U.S. with which the states need to engage. More importantly, in terms of lessons that might be drawn in a review of CMEC, there are substantial differences in scale that have resulted in the states operating in much more diverse ways. The states have created ECS and CCSSO as bodies through which they might share information and experience, but they have not committed, through anything like the Victoria Declaration, to the development of a "pan-U.S." view of educational issues and policy responses. To the extent to which there is a national perspective, it is generated by the federal government.

EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union (EU) is, in some senses, analogous to a federation. On issues of trade, for example, the Union speaks with one voice through its Commission. On education, sovereignty rests with the member states. There is, nevertheless, considerable cooperation among member states on education, facilitated by a strong Executive in the European Commission (EC) and by central funds managed by the Executive. The work on education is governed by a Council of Education Ministers that meets up to four times a year, supported by an Education Committee of officials.

The extent of the cooperation on education has been expanded considerably since 2000 by a decision of the EU heads of state to set an EU goal of becoming the “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.” The heads of state then gave an explicit remit to the education Ministers to pursue this goal through joint definition of education objectives, use of benchmarks to measure progress, and cooperation on programs. The heads of state thus changed the rules in the direction of a more collective perspective and more cooperative effort managed through a central Executive.

The equivalent in Canada would be for the new Council of the Federation to stimulate, or even direct as the EU Heads of State did, more active collaboration in building a pan-Canadian perspective on education. The extent to which the balance has shifted in the EU on education is still contested but it has certainly authorized a new set of activities for the Executive and given new directions to the Council of Ministers and the Education Committee.

ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is not an obvious source of ideas for CMEC, but it could offer some helpful parallels. There is no federal authority and the constituent members are independent countries with no obligations to work together in any particular way. Certainly, the countries cede no power to a central authority. The OECD simply provides a venue for cooperation by choice. Through cooperative work, policy options are developed for independent judgement by each member country.

In that sense, the OECD could provide a model for the way in which the Canadian provinces could work together in CMEC. OECD provides no model, however, for how provinces and a federal authority could work together.

The strategy for program development of OECD’s work on education, adopted in 2003, could provide an example of how CMEC might establish a strategic and focused agenda to pursue. It would involve identifying major, emerging issues and choosing to focus on them. The work on them would then

involve the provinces and a CMEC Secretariat that fulfilled an analytic, policy role in shaping and coordinating the work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CMEC

No model from another jurisdiction could be simply transplanted into Canada but there are some interesting lessons to be learned from a consideration of other systems.

In all federal systems considered here, responsibility for education rests at the provincial level not the federal level. In all, however, there has been a shift towards increased federal engagement and even federal responsibility, as in higher education in Australia. This has been driven in part by the need to connect education policy with other policy domains that are the responsibility of the Federal Government and in part by a growing intolerance among individuals and enterprises of what are seen to be relatively arbitrary differences between jurisdictions within a country. Increased mobility of workers and enterprises has fuelled the latter discontent.

Canada has moved less towards federal engagement in education than the other systems considered. Of the others, Germany has moved least. It has a Federal Department of Education and Research but that Department has only virtually no role in schooling, a role in vocational education limited to in-company training and a somewhat greater role in higher education driven by its engagement with research policy. There does appear to be much more substantial cooperation among provinces in Germany, managed through the KMK, than Canada achieves through CMEC. For Canada, Australia is likely to seem like a cautionary tale since the federal role there has grown at all levels of education over the past 50 years in ways that provincial representatives to whom we spoke would be likely to judge intolerable for Canada. The European Union is closer to Germany than Australia, which is not surprising given that the partners are not provinces within a country but whole countries. Nevertheless, the EU has recently moved towards a stronger collective perspective.

International considerations should become normative in a case like this. There is no one right way to do things and, even if changes elsewhere seem to be creating some kind of norm, others need not necessarily follow. Each country needs to determine what works best for it, given its history and culture.

One option for Canada would be to treat CMEC like the OECD as a forum in which policy issues can be explored collectively and for CMEC to have a Secretariat that could undertake the policy research and analysis, together with counterparts in the Provinces. Another option would be to treat CMEC like the German KMK and to negotiate a more extensive range of common policies and practices in the development of a pan-Canadian perspective. If Canada were to adopt the Australian model, CMEC would become like the Australian MCEETYA and would be a body in which provincial and federal authorities work together, in the process determining what policies could have unique local expression in the provinces and what would best be pan-Canadian.

CHAPTER FOUR

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

CMEC's mandate is articulated in the 1967 "Agreed Memorandum on a Council of Ministers of Education, Canada" (MOU) and is contained in two main clauses:

2. The purposes of the Council are to enable the ministers to consult on such matters as are of common interest, to provide a means for the fullest co-operation possible among Provincial and Territorial governments in areas of mutual interest and concern in education and to cooperate with other education organizations to promote the development of education in Canada.

and

7. Duties of the Council

While recognizing the autonomy of each provincial or territorial ministry/department, the Council shall serve its members in the areas of:

- a) joint consultation and action in respect of mutual problems for mutual benefits;*
- b) joint decision-making on, and shared participation in, those international activities in which it might be involved, including appropriate consultation with federal jurisdiction; and*
- c) information sharing.*

Based on issues and concerns raised with reviewers during consultations in the various jurisdictions, an examination of current issues facing education in Canada, and an analysis of research on international and Canadian models of Ministerial cooperation, the reviewers examined CMEC's mission and mandate to determine if any changes are required.

The reviewers concluded that CMEC's mandate statement is certainly broad enough to cover a wide range of activities for the Council. Furthermore, there do not appear to be any limitations to action in the MOU. As such, the mission and mandate contained in the document seem appropriate and adequate to give the Council full scope for future activities. Also, the wording, spirit, and intent of the MOU are consistent with the vision that Ministers of Education have across the country. Ministers see the Council as a body that develops and promotes the pan-Canadian agenda for education in Canada.

However, during consultations, all jurisdictions identified the need for Council to demonstrate progress on pan-Canadian issues. Of the three duties of Council listed in Clause 7, information sharing currently dominates CMEC's agenda. Aside from a few notable and significant exceptions, the Council appears to have had limited progress in "action in respect of mutual problems" and in its role to "promote the development of education in Canada."

A change of wording in the mission/mandate of the Council is not required, but the reviewers are recommending a change in the emphasis and activities of CMEC — to cooperation and action, the words utilized in the MOU text. CMEC needs to shift its emphasis to “joint consultation and action in respect of mutual problems for mutual benefits,” as outlined in part 7(a) of the MOU.

It is noteworthy that the wording of the MOU, signed 30 years ago, has stood the test of time and still captures the general scope of the organization’s mission and mandate. The wording has not been a constraint to the cooperative action that all jurisdictions identified as desirable and indeed necessary for CMEC to become a leader in education. The challenge is to find a more effective way to realize that mandate and mission, faced with the kinds of structural obstacles that are a natural and perhaps unavoidable by-product of the thirteen-jurisdiction organization. CMEC has clearly articulated a vision for the organization, but has not been able to make consistent progress to realize that vision.

The reviewers recommend changes in five areas that could move CMEC towards realizing its vision:

- A. Setting an agenda and work plan to achieve CMEC’s strategic goals
- B. Defining roles and responsibilities
- C. Defining a relationship with the federal government
- D. Defining relationships with NGOs
- E. Administrative processes and mechanisms

The reviewers suggest that, as a starting point, CMEC look to the OECD as a model of operating. CMEC should provide a forum to explore policy options. As this policy work is completed, CMEC should look to the German model of educational co-operation where a range of common policies and practices are negotiated. As pointed out in Chapter 3, models from other jurisdictions cannot simply be transplanted into Canada but there are some interesting approaches from other countries that could be considered to advance CMEC’s agenda.

A. Setting an Agenda and Work Plan to Achieve CMEC’s Strategic Goals

For CMEC to become the leader for education in Canada, the organization must adopt an action-oriented work plan that gives meaning and application to the vision articulated in the Victoria Declaration. The Council must agree on an agenda that addresses the educational challenges facing Canada, set a work plan with specific deliverables to accomplish the agenda, and report progress to the public.

New processes need to be adopted to make this happen. The review team is suggesting that CMEC implement a process used by the new OECD Education Directorate. In preparation for a special meeting of the chief executive of the OECD education ministry (equivalent to deputies), convened in Ireland, the chief executives were asked to identify the most significant policy issues their country would

face over the next three to five years. The Directorate's work program was reorganized around the five strategic objectives that emerged from the discussion. If CMEC were to adopt this process, a priority-setting meeting of Ministers and Deputies would follow this step and a list of policy issues for collaborative action would be developed. From that list, the Secretariat, in consultation with the provinces/territories, could prepare background papers on the selected topics and propose options for a specific CMEC agenda to ACDME. Deputies would review the work before it goes to Ministers for discussion and approval. Once the agenda is determined, the Secretariat, in consultation with ACDME, would develop a work plan for Ministers' approval.

These two steps must be given priority:

- Definition of a pan-Canadian agenda for education, following the spirit and intent of the Victoria Declaration
- Development of a work plan for the agenda that contains specific deliverables, evaluation criteria, and timelines

Once approved, CMEC should take the agenda and work plan forward to Premiers (perhaps in their new structure as the Council of the Federation) to acquaint Premiers with the issues and the priorities that have been set. With the Premiers' input and endorsement, the education agenda will have a higher profile, and with regular reports to the Annual Premiers' Conference (APC), or the Council of the Federation, the education agenda will be tied into the Premiers' agenda and priorities. This approach will emphasize that the education agenda is an integral part of the pan-Canadian agenda for Premiers.

After defining its agenda and work plan, and receiving the Premiers' endorsement and a place on the Premiers' agenda, CMEC needs to develop a communications strategy. This will allow CMEC to increase its visibility and engage in a dialogue with Canadians. The communications function should be housed in the Secretariat and staffed by experts in the field. It is also recommended that CMEC adopt the methods used by the Council of Environment Ministers in developing its publicly available work plans and in posting progress reports on CMEC's website.

B. Defining Roles and Responsibilities

An understanding of roles and responsibilities is critical to the efficient and effective functioning of any organization, especially one as complex as CMEC. From consultations with the provinces/territories and with Secretariat staff, it is obvious that there is a significant breakdown in the common understanding of roles and responsibilities. If the Council is to move forward in a decisive manner, roles must be clarified to guide the daily activities of the various people involved at all levels of the organization.

Below, recommendations for the main parameters and distinctions in the various levels and functions in CMEC are outlined.

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS:

It is the responsibility of the Council to set a visible long-range agenda for education with a detailed business plan for the next three to five years to achieve the Council’s vision. Activities of the Council should be strategic, rather than reactive, and should advance the pan-Canadian education agenda through linkages and dialogue with the Premiers and the emerging Council of the Federation. These activities would ensure that education issues have a high profile in the political decision-making process at the pan-Canadian level.

The Council also needs to formulate an agenda for educational activities abroad. In the current environment, the provinces generally react on a piecemeal basis to international meetings, not always with an understanding of the big-picture agenda. Ministers need to define an international agenda that supports their pan-Canadian agenda and set priorities for the international activities.

The Council appears to have become consumed to a great degree with information sharing and project management. The Council should not spend its limited time dealing with administrative items or project updates, but should focus on a strategic, policy-based agenda to fulfill its role as leader for education in Canada, the voice of education in the country, and the coordinator for Canada’s international activities in education.

In summary, a significant shift in the profile and agenda for the Council of Ministers is recommended below:

From	To
Reactive	Proactive
Information sharing	Leader for education in Canada
Project management	Policy agenda
Ad Hoc agenda	Strategic agenda

MINISTERIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

During consultations with the provinces/territories, there appeared to be confusion about the role of the Executive Committee and whether or not it is needed. If CMEC adopts the recommendation to become more focused and strategic, the Executive Committee would become key to the operation of the organization. The Executive should assume responsibilities for the ongoing business of the Council of Ministers and the corporation. In fact, the duties of the Ministerial Executive Committee appear to be quite well laid out in the MOU, but appear to have been lost in actual practice over the last few years.

The Council may from time to time by resolution delegate to the Executive any or all of the Council's powers . . . In particular, the Executive shall serve as a steering committee on policy matters and shall bring forward for consideration by the Council issues in respect of which it is anticipated that the Council may be required to formulate policies and proposals. The Executive shall act as the Council's finance committee . . . (Extracts from Clause 11e)

More important than the administrative business of the Council of Ministers is the role the Executive needs to assume as a policy steering committee to ensure CMEC's agenda is relevant, achievable, and up-to-date. The executive group needs to ensure that meetings reflect the Ministers' agenda, that the Council stays focused on strategic education issues, and that progress is being made toward the set objectives.

One issue raised by many jurisdictions was lack of understanding about the process for setting meeting agendas. There is concern the agenda is project driven and that projects never end as they go through many cycles in their development. The executive group needs to control the agenda to ensure it is relevant.

Some jurisdictions were dissatisfied with the structure and make-up of the executive group. This issue was examined in an attempt to find alternatives, but the identified alternatives all had inherent or equally disadvantageous qualities. It is a problem faced by many interprovincial and federal/provincial/territorial groups in the country and is an issue to which no one has found a solution. One suggestion is to watch the evolution of the Council of the Federation to determine if it develops any alternatives applicable to the Council of Ministers' situation. However, at the current time, it is probably best to leave the composition of the executive as is, while recognizing that it is not ideal. The executive should refer substantive agenda items to the Council of Ministers as a whole to ensure full participation of all members.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF DEPUTY MINISTERS OF EDUCATION (ACDME)

In many respects, it appears the function of ACDME needs to be stronger and more proactive so that the Council of Ministers can stay focused on strategic issues and is able to implement the Ministerial agenda. ACDME should be responsible for taking the agenda articulated by the Council of Ministers and, in cooperation with the Secretariat, devising a work plan, structuring performance measures, and monitoring progress. As in government operations where Deputies are the administrative heads of the organization and responsible for implementation of the vision and the marshalling of appropriate resources to achieve objectives, ACDME should have the responsibility to approve budgets and structure working groups as required, within the broad objectives set by the Council of Ministers.

With the new approach being proposed in this report, the role of ACDME is critical to achieving the Council of Ministers' vision, particularly with regard to ensuring CMEC's agenda is implemented. As well, ACDME should have responsibility for administrative issues, such as budget, and these items should be removed from the Ministers' agenda.

SECRETARIAT:

For the most part, there is consensus across jurisdictions that a permanent Secretariat is required for CMEC. Jurisdictions feel a Secretariat gives the Council of Ministers a definite advantage to achieve its objectives. Most jurisdictions have considered alternative models for administrative and policy support, such as the FLMM approach, but based on their experience with these and other models, think the existence of a permanent Secretariat provides resources that would allow solid progress once an agenda is defined and ratified by the Council of Ministers.

The Secretariat is seen as the “legs” of the Council of Ministers, and in cooperation with the jurisdictions, the basis of its expertise. The Secretariat should be responsible for coordinating policy research, analysis, environmental scanning, and issue identification. The Secretariat should be responsible for proposing and implementing the work program to realize the Council of Ministers' agenda.

As well, an important function of the Secretariat is the publication and distribution of statistical data and ongoing research to provide basic information and identify current and emerging trends for the Council of Ministers and Canadians. There seems to have been some confusion over the role of the provinces in the sign-off for publication of routine data. The role of the Secretariat for this function needs to be clarified. A publications/release plan needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers and then implemented by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat is also responsible for the coordination and support for international delegations from Canada. The challenge for the Secretariat is to identify international opportunities and projects that support the Canadian agenda; to move from distribution of the many international reports to strategic analysis of international material that can be useful and relevant to the jurisdictions; and to provide context and follow-up for Canadian delegations to international meetings and events. Once the Council of Ministers defines a Canadian agenda for the international arena, the Secretariat needs to develop a plan to implement it.

The size of the Secretariat is an issue that is often raised. The reviewers are not able to comment on the size of the Secretariat, in the absence of a Ministers' agenda against which to evaluate workloads. However, if the recommendations of this report are adopted, there is a definite need to rethink the composition and organization of the Secretariat, as functions like policy research, expertise, and coordination will need to be added to the Secretariat.

There is clearly a need to develop a communications function in the Secretariat to increase the profile and visibility of CMEC. This function has been overlooked in the design of the Secretariat. However, the development of a communications agenda needs to follow identification of a CMEC agenda, as a communications strategy will be a vital part of implementing the work plan. The creation of pan-Canadian Awards of Excellence in Education, for example, could help raise the public profile of the Council.

DIRECTOR GENERAL (DG):

Lack of a clearly articulated agenda for CMEC and an implementation plan to realize its goals and objectives contributes to role confusion at all levels of the organization. Nowhere is this more profoundly evident than in the DG position. It is clear that the DG is the head of the Secretariat and serves the Council, but beyond that, clarity of the role and responsibilities ends. If the Secretariat is to continue and if the Council mandate is to be fully realized, the role and responsibilities of the DG must be agreed upon. It is recommended by the reviewers that the DG be given the mandate to network and dialogue with the NGOs. Depending on the Council of Ministers' decision regarding its relationship with the federal government, the DG role, with respect to the federal government, needs to be articulated.

The DG also needs to be seen as the “content expert” and should be given a role in profiling the Council's agenda, as defined and directed by the Ministers, and the work of the Secretariat in research and data collection. The ambiguity of the DG role should be alleviated, to some degree, with the adoption of an agenda and work plan for the Council that will provide the DG and all staff with goals, objectives, and priorities.

There are some specific recommendations that the reviewers have about the DG position. First, the reporting relationship for the DG is not clear in the existing MOU. It should be clarified that the DG reports to the Council of Ministers through the Chair. Also, the title DG is perceived differently by various jurisdictions and the reviewers examined alternatives, thinking that a change in title could signal a new approach to the Council's work and clarify the role. No suitable alternative was found.

If the reviewers' recommendations about organizational change are adopted, the DG will need to focus on providing policy support to the Council of Ministers. The role will also shift dramatically in the federal/provincial/territorial relations area. The DG also needs to identify and implement the organizational and cultural change required in the Secretariat to move the organization forward.

Following is a summary of the recommendations regarding roles and responsibilities for the organization.

SUMMARY OF ROLES/RELATIONSHIPS

Council of Ministers

- *Articulates strategic vision*
- *Defines agenda and approves work plan to implement the vision*
- *Reviews progress*
- *Profiles pan-Canadian education agenda*

Ministerial Executive Committee

- *Manages ongoing business of Council and the Corporation*
- *Functions as a policy steering committee*
- *Manages the agenda*

ACDME

- *Oversees implementation of the work plan*
- *Vets agendas/reports before they go to Ministers*
- *Manages administrative matters and approves budget*

DG

- *Heads the Secretariat*
- *Provides content expertise*
- *Liaises with NGOs*
- *Liaises with the federal government*

Secretariat

- *Supports Council of Ministers and ACDME*
- *Coordinates policy research, analysis, environmental scanning, and issue identification*
- *Implements the work plan for domestic and international agenda*

C. Defining a Relationship With the Federal Government

In the terms of reference for this review, the relationship between CMEC and the federal government was identified as an issue for the reviewers' consideration. This issue has been a matter of debate and contention for many years.

Education is clearly outlined in Section 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* as an area of provincial jurisdiction. While "education" is not defined in detail, it is generally accepted to include primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. As is the case in many fields, the boundary lines distinguishing education from other related areas have become blurred over the decades. In addition, extensive use of federal spending power over the last 50 years in the education area, particularly post-secondary education, has resulted in a complex picture of the actual state of funding support for activities directly or indirectly related to education in Canada.

The federal government has consistently pursued its agenda in the education-related arena, even in the absence of dialogue with the provinces. Federal government expenditures in the areas of research and development, skill development and training, and provision of student financial assistance are estimated to be approximately three times the value of the current federal direct transfer to the provinces for education. It is obvious that federal expenditures in these areas will continue as the federal government views education as a critical factor in the standard of living of Canadians and in the federal government's innovation agenda. The reviewers were told time and time again in the consultations with provinces, "The federal government will fill the vacuum if we don't have a clear and defined agenda."

Together, the federal and provincial governments spend \$26 billion on education and education-related activities in the country. Given the importance of education to the social and economic agenda of both provincial and federal governments, the reviewers are unanimous in their opinion that CMEC requires a mechanism for dialogue with the federal government to coordinate initiatives, discuss federal spending trends, and review anticipated future trends.

To date, interaction between CMEC and the federal government has been fragmented and ad hoc. Federal Ministers are invited to meet with CMEC on specific issues, but the relationship has rarely yielded meaningful consultation or a basis for cooperation and planning. Many of the provincial jurisdictions and the federal officials the reviewers met felt this resulted in missed opportunities in the education area. Both the provinces and federal officials have told us that, even when provinces reach consensus at the CMEC table, individual jurisdictions often pursue bilateral deals later with the federal government. This approach discredits the organization and puts CMEC and the provinces in a no-win situation.

The reviewers suggest that the provinces, which have jurisdiction in this area, take the lead by defining an agenda for federal/provincial/territorial cooperation and consideration. CMEC should undertake a comprehensive review of current and emerging trends and issues that impact education in Canada. The provinces should then define their priorities and engage the federal government in a dialogue to structure an agenda for federal/provincial/territorial work.

There are several options to provide a structure for a federal/provincial/territorial dialogue. They are summarized and discussed below:

1. Modified status quo – Following the current practice, CMEC could invite the federal Ministers and officials to meet on specific topics as required. To date, this reactive, one-off approach has yielded little follow-up on the issues, limited progress, and no comprehensive plan to move critical agenda items forward. This type of federal/provincial/territorial dialogue has resulted in considerable tension between the federal government and the provinces; indeed, it has resulted in considerable tension among the provinces.

NGOs support the opinion that this approach is not working and they urge the Council to be more proactive and focus attention on pan-Canadian issues in education.

If this approach is maintained, an attempt should be made to put rigour into structuring the agenda for interaction and follow-up with the federal government. However, the reviewers are of the opinion that this option will likely yield very limited results.

2. Modify the CMEC table – CMEC would continue the current structure of the Council that includes both education and post-secondary Ministers. However, for the purposes of dialogue with the federal government, K-12 and post-secondary education (PSE) issues would be split into two groups. The federal jurisdiction would be invited to dialogue on a regular basis on post-secondary and adult skill-development and training issues.

This option would attempt to protect provincial jurisdiction in the K-12 area. It would allow some joint discussion and planning with the federal government, may advance some of the critical issues on the post-secondary agenda, and should result in additional federal funding for provincial priorities at the post-secondary level.

This option sounds good in theory, but the reviewers are concerned the approach would be administratively cumbersome. As well, its major flaw is that splitting K-12 education from post-secondary issues works against consideration of education from the lifelong learning perspective necessary in today's world of high tech, globalization and multi-job careers. We also know from past initiatives, such as School Net and the Official Languages Program in Education, there are federal funds available for K-12. This model would preclude the opportunity to plan for these types of programs.

From a practical perspective, this model could be used as a transition strategy to open dialogue with the federal government and test a cooperative model to see if it produces the desired results.

3. A Deputies' Working Group for federal/provincial/territorial discussions – An informal working group of Deputies and the DG would be formed to meet with federal counterparts to determine the scope and likelihood of federal/provincial/territorial cooperation on education and related issues. The working group would report back to the Council of Ministers.

The advantage of this approach is that it allows CMEC to assess the possibility for federal/provincial/territorial cooperation without making a formal commitment or involving the Ministers. However, this is likely not a stand-alone option, and if CMEC decides to establish an ongoing dialogue with the federal government, this option may only be useful as an approach for transition to another model of operating.

4. Ongoing CMEC/Federal Government Group – CMEC would continue as it is currently structured in terms of its membership, as an interprovincial/territorial body. It would continue to hold regular meetings on issues of common concern flowing from its jurisdiction in education. In addition, an ongoing group consisting of CMEC and relevant federal Ministers, supported by a mirror Deputy group, would be created. The group would be carefully guided by defined objectives and expected outcomes. It is essential that the agenda for this group be set by CMEC prior to inviting federal participation. The following process for setting the agenda is recommended.

The executive of ACDME, with the assistance of the Secretariat, should oversee the Secretariat's development of an inventory of current federal/provincial/territorial issues, opportunities, and trends, with a full evaluation of each. Options and recommendations for an agenda for federal/provincial/territorial dialogue should be drafted and submitted for full ACDME discussion and debate. After this step, the report should be forwarded to the Council of Ministers for discussion, debate, political input, and priority setting. The initial agenda should be set before approaching the federal government to engage in dialogue about the defined agenda and to agree on the parameters for action.

There needs to be at least one annual meeting of the federal and provincial Ministers to review progress, update the plan, confirm or modify priorities and exchange information.

The reviewers feel the issue of CMEC's relationship to the federal government must be addressed and are recommending Option 4 — establishing an ongoing CMEC/Federal Government Group. Education is a critical issue and there is a need for significant policy and program development given the changing dynamics in society and the world of work. Without this initiative to structure an ongoing dialogue with the federal government, there will be a continuation of the past trends — missed opportunities, lack of cooperation, federal unilateralism, and federal/provincial/territorial tension.

OPTIONS TO STRUCTURE A FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL DIALOGUE ON EDUCATION

1. Modified Status Quo

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite federal Ministers to discuss specific topics • Structure an agenda and follow-up activities
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes provincial jurisdiction
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not yielded progress due to reactive approach • Lacks ongoing dialogue
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach has resulted in federal/provincial/territorial tension as well as tension between provinces/territories

2. Modify the CMEC Table

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with current structure but pursue a dialogue with the federal government on PSE issues (split K-12 from PSE)
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects provincial jurisdiction in K-12 • Would likely allow joint discussions and planning with the federal government on PSE issues
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May preclude opportunities for federal funds in K-12 • Could be administratively cumbersome • Contradicts lifelong learning concept
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach could be used as a transition strategy to open dialogue and test cooperation

3. Deputies' Working Group for federal/provincial/territorial Dialogue

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an informal Deputies' Working Group that would meet with federal officials to determine an agenda for collaboration
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens dialogue with federal government
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not involve Ministers • May be too informal for sufficient commitment and progress
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach could be a useful transition strategy

4. Ongoing CMEC/Federal Government Group

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to meet as is • CMEC would meet with relevant federal Ministers on an agenda initially defined by CMEC
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives CMEC the lead in setting initial agenda • Allows collaboration on relevant issues • Establishes ongoing commitment
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be seen as inviting federal government into area of provincial jurisdiction
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended Option

If the recent CRIC poll results are any indication, Canadians see increased funding for health and education as two of their top three priorities. The third priority identified was improved federal/provincial/territorial cooperation. The poll results, released on October 30, 2003, give an interesting overview of public opinion on this issue. According to the poll, only 42 per cent of Canadians think the two orders of government are working well together and 70 per cent think that both orders of government are equally to blame when conflicts occur (Appendix G). Pundits are interpreting this as impatience on the part of Canadians with federal/provincial/territorial conflict and as a message to governments to work together on the critical issues facing Canada.

D. Defining Relationships with NGOs

Many non-governmental organizations have gravitated to building relationships with the federal government because that is where they think the power and the funding are located. The relationship between NGOs and CMEC in policy development has been very limited. However, the Council needs to be aware of the thinking of the major institutional organizations. The issue for CMEC is to be strategic in its relationships with national NGOs, but not overwhelmed by liaison functions, given limited resources and time.

The reviewers suggest that the Secretariat be given responsibility for ongoing liaison, with responsibility for providing a summary report to the Council. The DG should also have responsibility for suggesting specific meetings or presentations from the NGOs to the Council, if they can make a relevant contribution to the strategic agenda of the Council. The reviewers also feel it is important for the Council to hold roundtables from time to time with NGOs on specific policy issues to ensure their input in policy development.

E. Administrative Processes and Mechanisms

Meeting Agendas - The reviewers recommend that the Council should maintain bi-annual meetings, but agendas of meetings need to be drastically modified to focus on policy. To ensure a policy focus to meetings, ACDME needs to meet at least a month before the Ministers to deal with the administrative questions and vet the agenda. Ministers' briefing books need to be short, relevant, and distributed in a timely fashion. The Secretariat and ACDME need to have the ability to refuse any last-minute item on the Council's agenda, unless it is urgent and of utmost importance.

The Ministers need to have time to focus on policy themes at their meetings. It is strongly recommended that policy discussions be introduced by an expert (either in person or through a policy discussion paper). Once the Ministers have debated an item, they can decide on the feasibility of pursuing common issues if it fits with their agenda.

If the recommendations contained in this report are endorsed by Ministers, a special planning meeting to initiate development of an agenda should be scheduled as soon as possible. The suggested process for preparation and follow-up to this meeting is outlined on page 25.

CMEC should avoid taking on isolated projects unrelated to their agenda, especially ones that do not fit the longer-term work plan. But occasionally, Ministers will want to work cooperatively on specific projects. In these cases, the Secretariat should have the lead and be mandated to steer the project through to completion. Wherever appropriate, steering committees or project teams, comprising three or four provinces/territories, should be established.

Secretariat Review – As the Council redefines its agenda and work plan over the next few months, the staffing of the Secretariat will need to be examined to ensure the Secretariat has the appropriate financial resources and skill base to accommodate the required tasks. The reviewers anticipate that policy and communications staff will have to be added to the Secretariat because of the emphasis on these two functions in the recommendations. The Director-General needs to determine, within the set objectives, the mandate, the budget available, roles of staff, and staffing needs. To ensure flexibility at the Secretariat and encourage more provincial input, secondment arrangements from provinces/territories or other institutions for specific agenda items and specific periods of time are strongly encouraged. This approach could procure a varied source of expertise and welcomed flexibility. Contracts can also be used to tap into the many sources of expertise available on specific topics.

Every two years, the executive of the Council needs to review the salary scales and benefits of the staff.

This chapter contains a number of recommendations, with suggestions about implementation. To facilitate consideration of the recommendations, the reviewers have provided a summary of the main points.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *CMEC should define an agenda to give meaning and application to the vision articulated by Ministers in the Victoria Declaration.*
2. *CMEC needs to define an agenda for activities in the international arena.*
3. *The agenda must be accompanied by a work plan with specific objectives, deliverables, and timelines.*
4. *CMEC should adopt new processes for these tasks (#1 and #2), including a special priority-setting meeting of Ministers and Deputies to define the agenda.*
5. *CMEC should engage Premiers, either through the Annual Premiers' Conference or the Council of the Federation, by seeking their endorsement of the agenda and by providing Premiers with regular progress reports.*
6. *CMEC needs to develop a communications strategy to profile its agenda with the public and education stakeholders.*
7. *CMEC work plans and progress reports should be available to the public through the website.*
8. *Roles and responsibilities in the organization need to be clarified.*
9. *CMEC should establish an ongoing mechanism for engaging the federal government in dialogue and collaboration on the education agenda.*
10. *CMEC should establish a process for engaging NGOs in policy discussions related to CMEC's agenda.*
11. *Meeting agendas should be carefully managed to ensure they reflect the Ministers' agenda.*
12. *Once the agenda and work plan have been determined, the Secretariat should be reviewed to ensure it has the appropriate resources and staff to implement the work plan.*

CHAPTER FIVE

S U M M A R Y

It is a crucial time for leadership in education in Canada. The country, from an international perspective, invests a high level of funding in education and has comparatively high levels of participation in education and relatively high overall educational attainment rates. However, evidence shows that Canada's relative position is slipping. There is concern among all the jurisdictions that pan-Canadian issues need collective attention and action before the country loses more ground in its educational performance.

Canadian politics have been very fluid in the last year. Many provincial governments have been to the polls in the last year and there have been some significant changes in the political landscape across the country. The priorities set by Premiers and the approach they decide to take in pursuing their objectives, as well as the general state of federal/provincial/territorial relations, will have a significant impact on development of education policy over the next few years.

A factor that may eventually impact the development of education policy is the design and operation of the new Council of the Federation. In July 2003, Canada's Premiers agreed to create the Council of the Federation to work toward increased provincial cooperation and collaboration. The initiative is designed to revitalize the workings of the federation through new interprovincial and intergovernmental arrangements. It is not yet clear how the new Council of the Federation will operate, but there has been some speculation that key sectoral Ministerial tables (like Health, CMEC and others) may be brought under the mandate of the Council of the Federation, with these bodies reporting directly to the Premiers. It remains to be seen how the Council of the Federation is designed and implemented in the next few months. One key issue is whether or not the Council of the Federation becomes a vertical intergovernmental body (to coordinate and pursue federal/provincial/territorial discussions) or if it defines itself as an interprovincial body.

Many jurisdictions are of the opinion that the appointment of a new federal administration will herald a new era of federal/provincial/territorial cooperation. There have been signals that the incoming administration wants to work cooperatively with provinces/territories and set aside the bickering that has characterized the last few years of federal/provincial/territorial relations. This, in concert with other political changes and the move to emphasize cooperation in Canada through the Council of the Federation, has left a feeling of optimism among many jurisdictions. The observation has been made several times that there is an emerging political window of opportunity to advance a significant agenda of provincial cooperation and collaboration in education, and even federal/provincial/territorial collaboration. History shows that these types of "windows" tend to be timelimited and, if progress is not demonstrated in the first few months, there is a tendency to lapse back into former patterns of behaviour and cynicism.

CMEC has had two other reviews of the organization — one in 1982 and one in 1993. The reviews were very different in approach and detail, but both concluded with general recommendations similar to each other and to this 2003 review. All reviews emphasize that CMEC's mission and mandate are well founded, but that the Council needs to adopt an action-oriented agenda and work plan to become the leader in education in Canada. The challenge is how to reorient the organization to embed a strategic policy focus in everyday operations.

The reviewers have drafted a series of recommendations, contained in detail in Chapter 4, including suggestions for implementing the recommendations. An outline of roles and responsibilities for all levels of the organization has also been suggested. The reviewers feel that, in order for CMEC to fulfill its mandate, there are three priorities to address as soon as possible:

1. Develop an action-oriented agenda, based on the vision articulated in the Victoria Declaration, including a work plan with specific objectives and timelines
2. Seek the Premiers' endorsement for an agenda and provide regular reports on progress to the Annual Premiers' Council or the Council of the Federation
3. Decide on an option to engage the federal government in dialogue on potential collaborative issues

Administrative and organizational issues should be dealt with after these steps to ensure administration changes support the strategic goals and objectives.

With regard to the administrative support for CMEC, the reviewers feel the presence of a permanent Secretariat gives the Council the distinct advantage of dedicated resources, continuity of knowledge, and critical mass to undertake an ambitious agenda. However, the Secretariat's organization and culture need to shift to reflect the new direction of the Council and it is anticipated that staff with policy expertise will have to be recruited. Also, a communication function should be established at the Secretariat to support Ministers in raising the visibility of CMEC and to support liaison functions, particularly with the NGOs.

It is essential that the role and responsibilities of the Director-General be clarified and performance expectations outlined, based on the Ministerial agenda. This should be undertaken in relation to the definition of roles and responsibilities at all levels of the organization.

The recommendations in this report are formulated for the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada in light of the current political backdrop and issues raised in the consultations. In charting CMEC's new course, Council members must remember that consensus is a difficult way to progress; it can narrow the agenda considerably. However, a spirit of consensus is required to make CMEC work. More than ever, there is a need to go back to the spirit demonstrated in the mid-sixties by the original founders of CMEC and to regain some of the determination and cohesiveness of the past.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA (CMEC)
Review of the mission and mandate of CMEC
Terms of reference
(Revised June 20, 2003)

Introduction

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) is a voluntary grouping of the ministers responsible for education in the provinces and territories of Canada. It was created in 1967 through the approval of the *Agreed Memorandum on a Council of Ministers of Education, Canada* by all the provincial governments. The territories became members in the 1990s.

According to the Agreed Memorandum,

The purposes of the Council are to enable the ministers to consult on such matters as are of common interest, to provide a means for the fullest possible cooperation among Provincial and Territorial Member governments in areas of mutual interest and concern in education and to cooperate with other educational organizations to promote the development of education in Canada.

The goals have been reviewed a number of times since 1967, most recently in 1999, and have been confirmed each time.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, seeks an appraisal of its future mission, objectives, and capabilities. CMEC wishes such an appraisal to establish a framework for the organization's future and foundation for renewal. To these ends, CMEC proposes that a review be undertaken within the following terms of reference.

Premises

Whereas provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education and higher education have collectively agreed to review the mission, mandates, powers, and structure of CMEC at both the political and administrative levels;

Whereas education and higher education are within the jurisdiction of provinces and territories, this review is founded on the underlying basic principle that the ministers responsible must collectively exercise strong leadership at both the pan-Canadian and international levels, and their leadership role must be recognized by the general public and by governments, including the federal government;

Mandate

Ministers charge a panel of three experts with reporting and making recommendations to them, after consultations, on what CMEC's mission, mandates, powers, and structure should be, at both the political and administrative levels.

In particular, the experts should include

- recommendations concerning relationships among CMEC member governments
- recommendations concerning relationships between CMEC and the federal government
- recommendations concerning relationships between CMEC and major national nongovernmental organizations
- a review of the specific roles and responsibilities of CMEC and of the CMEC Secretariat

Process

The examiners will be required to consult with all ministers of education and higher education or their designates in person or by telephone. They may also meet with deputy ministers, staff of the CMEC Secretariat, and related officials, as required.

Where appropriate, the examiners may incorporate the findings of earlier reviews of CMEC and the findings of other related studies and reports.

The examiners may also collect information from stakeholder audiences for the work of CMEC such as federal officials, labour market ministers, and national education-related non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The examiners will study similar organizations in other jurisdictions, notably the United States, Germany, Australia, and the European Union, to determine if there are practices or arrangements in those jurisdictions that could profitably be applied to the Canadian context.

Structure

1. The CMEC Executive Committee will act as steering committee for the review. The Chair of ACDME and the Director General will develop a suitable method for reporting on the progress of the review.
2. The Executive Committee will appoint a review panel, composed of two Canadian examiners and one international examiner, all of whom will be knowledgeable educators with recognized expertise in their fields.
3. It is anticipated that the completion of the review will require approximately 100 person days. The members of the panel will themselves determine the number of days that each one will work within the 100 days.
4. The review panel will be supported by the CMEC Secretariat, which will prepare such background material and provide such logistical support as may be necessary for the conduct of the review. The CMEC Secretariat will compile all relevant materials for the review, including reports of prior reviews and studies of CMEC, reports of the Director General, and any other material deemed pertinent to the review, and will organize that material to facilitate easy reference.
5. The members of the panel will be reimbursed, according to approved CMEC guidelines, for the costs of all travel required in the conduct of the review. Travel will require prior approval by the Director General.
6. The Executive Committee will name the Chair of ACDME as the principal liaison between CMEC and the review panel to ensure the efficient and timely conduct of the review.
7. The review panel is charged with the responsibility of regularly reviewing the timetable and recommending modifications if unforeseen circumstances arise.

Timelines/critical path

1. The Executive Committee signs off on the terms of reference and membership of the review panel: June 6, 2003.
2. The revised terms of reference are circulated to all CMEC members along with confirmation of membership of review panel: June 11, 2003.
3. Specific questions are requested from members of CMEC for the panel: June 30, 2003
4. In August 2003, the review team comes to Toronto to finalize its roles and responsibilities, determine the organization and timelines for the review, and meet with the Chair of ACDME.
5. Reviewers meet (either face to face or by telephone) with ministers of education and ministers of postsecondary education: late August/September 2003.
6. Reviewers meet with individual ministers and officials who may not have been interviewed during the summer and/or with groups of ministers who may feel there is a need to present a collective perspective, e.g., territorial ministers, ministers from the Atlantic Region or the Prairie Region. There will also be opportunities for interaction with the full Council: CMEC meeting, September 30 – October 1, 2003.
7. Consultations take place with other stakeholders, including NGOs reviewed by the Chair of ACDME and labour market ministers; information is gathered from federal level; a second round of consultations with provinces and territories will take place, if necessary; comparisons are made with models and jurisdictions abroad: October 2003.
8. Work continues toward a draft report: November 2003.
9. Draft report and conclusions are sent to Executive Committee for comment: Early December 2003.
10. Reviewers meet face to face or by telephone with CMEC Executive Committee. Executive decides whether to bring final report and recommendations to winter meeting of CMEC or request the review team to do so: Mid-December 2003.
11. Report, conclusions, and recommendations are submitted to the full CMEC: January 1, 2004.
12. CMEC meeting is held in Toronto. Review team's report and recommendations are considered by the full CMEC: Late February/Early March 2004 (there is the option of a special, earlier meeting of CMEC in January to consider the report).

APPENDIX B

AGREED MEMORANDUM on a COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL

The ministers of education of the Canadian provinces/territories with the concurrence of their respective governments, have agreed, as from the 26th day of September, 1967, to establish and have established the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, hereinafter referred to as the "Council".

2. OBJECTS OF THE COUNCIL

The purposes of the Council are to enable the ministers to consult on such matters as are of common interest, to provide a means for the fullest possible cooperation among Provincial and Territorial Member governments in areas of mutual interest and concern in education and to cooperate with other educational organizations to promote the development of education in Canada.

3. LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DUALITY

The Council recognizes the principle of linguistic and cultural duality. The Council shall take all necessary steps to ensure the application of this principle in carrying out its purpose as well as in its practices and procedures.

4. MEMBERS, DESIGNATES AND THEIR OFFICIALS

- a) The Council shall consist of the holder from time to time:
 - i. of the portfolio of minister of education in and for each province, and each territory of Canada holding the status of Territorial Member; and
 - ii. of a portfolio that, in the opinion of the Council, is in addition to that of minister of education also primarily responsible for education in a province or a territory of Canada holding the status of Territorial Member, each of whom is hereinafter referred to as a "Provincial Member of the Council" or "Territorial Member of the Council".
- b) A Provincial or Territorial Member may be represented at a meeting of the Council by his or her deputy minister or by such other official as the Member may designate.
- c) A Provincial or Territorial Member, or his or her designate in the absence of the Member, may be accompanied at meetings by such officials of his or her ministry/department or advisors as the Member considers appropriate.
- d) In respect of jurisdictions other than a province of Canada, the Council may from time to time grant a territorial or an observer status at its meetings for the minister of education and his or her deputy minister and officials or advisors. As of the date hereof, Territorial Member status has been granted to the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut.

5. VOTING

Each Member shall have one vote and in the absence of the Member, the designate may exercise the vote of the Member without proof of the authorization of the Member.

6. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

- a) A Chair of the Council will be elected biennially and a Vice-Chair will be elected annually from among Provincial Members of the Council.
- b) Should the Chair or the Vice-Chair cease to be a Provincial Member, his or her successor to Provincial Membership in the Council assumes the chair only where the Executive in consultation with the province or territories concerned so decides, and the decision of the Executive is effective to constitute the holder of the chair as Acting Chair or Vice-Chair, as the case may be.

7. DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL

While recognizing the autonomy of each provincial or territorial ministry/department, the Council shall serve its Members in the areas of:

- a) joint consultation and action in respect of mutual problems for mutual benefits;
- b) joint decision-making on, and shared participation in, those international activities in which it might be involved, including appropriate consultation with federal jurisdiction; and
- c) information sharing.

8. POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

- a) The Council, as the only body composed of those ministers who are responsible for education in Canada, may present from time to time position papers or statements representative of provincial or territorial concerns or opinions on the state of education in Canada.
- b) The Council, because of its membership, is the official channel for decisions affecting Canada-wide educational policy.
- c) The Council, because of its membership, is, for the provinces or territories who so wish, an official channel to deal with the various federal ministries on matters related to attendance and participation at international conferences or meetings requiring a Canadian presence relative to education.
- d) Statements made by the Council shall be considered a unanimous position unless minority statements are filed.

9. MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

- a) The Council may hold its meetings in any province or territory of Canada.
- b) The Council shall meet at least twice each year, and meetings may be called,
 - i. at the request of the Chair, or Acting Chair determined by the Executive;
 - ii. at the request of three Members, a majority of whom shall be Provincial Members;
 - iii. as mutually agreed.
- c) The Chair or Acting Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Council or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair, and in the absence of such persons, the minister present who is most senior in terms of service as a Provincial Member of the Council shall preside.
- d) If all the Members of the Council present at or participating in the meeting consent, a meeting of the Members of the Council or of any committee thereof may be held by means of such

telephone, electronic or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously, and a Member participating in such a meeting by such means shall be deemed to be present at such meeting. Notice of such meeting shall be given at least 48 hours in advance unless, either before or after the meeting, the giving of such notice is waived by all entitled to receive it. Minutes of such meetings shall be circulated within a reasonable time thereafter.

- e) A resolution in writing, signed by all the Members entitled to vote on that resolution at a meeting of the Members of the Council or of any committee thereof, shall be as valid as if it were passed at a meeting thereof, as the case may be.

10. QUORUM FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS

One half of the number of Members of the Council at any time constitutes a quorum of the Members, and for such purpose a designate of a Member in the absence of the Member shall be deemed to be a Member.

11. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL

- a) The Council shall have an executive committee, hereinafter referred to as the “Executive”, which consists of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council and three other Provincial Members who shall be elected annually.
- b) The Executive shall include one Member from
 - i. British Columbia,
 - ii. the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba,
 - iii. Ontario,
 - iv. Quebec, and
 - v. the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland.

Each such Member may be represented at a meeting of the Executive by an official designated by the Member, and such designate has the right to vote at the meeting.

The Northwest Territories will be represented by the member from the Prairie Region, and Yukon will be represented by the member from British Columbia.

- c) A member of the Executive or his or her designate may be accompanied at a meeting of the Executive by such officials of his or her ministry/department and advisors as he or she considers appropriate.
- d) Where a member of the Executive ceases to be a Member, his or her successor assumes membership on the Executive only where the remaining members of the Executive in consultation with the province or territories concerned so decide, and where the remaining members of the Executive do not so decide, the vacancy shall be filled by the Council.
- e) The Council may from time to time by resolution delegate to the Executive any or all of the Council’s powers, whether in respect of a specific matter under consideration or whether in respect of certain classes of matters generally. In particular, the Executive shall serve as a steering committee on policy matters and shall bring forward for consideration by the Council issues in respect of which it is anticipated that the Council may be required to formulate

policies and proposals. The Executive shall act as the Council's finance committee. In addition, the Executive shall act for and on behalf of the Council in respect of urgent matters, with the understanding that such powers will be exercised in conjunction with all consultative measures as are necessary and appropriate in the circumstances including a report to the next meeting of the Council.

- f) In lieu of a plenary meeting of the Council, the Director General may act on Council matters with the agreement of the Chair and two other members of the Executive, after having polled and received comments from all members of the Executive.
- g)
 - i. Meetings of the Executive will be held at the call of the Chair of the Council or of any two members of the Executive.
 - ii. Three members of the Executive shall constitute a quorum of the Executive.
 - iii. If all members of the Executive present at or participating in the meeting consent, a meeting of the Executive may be held by means of such telephone, electronic or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously, and a member participating in such a meeting by such means shall be deemed to be present at such meeting. Notice of such meeting shall be given at least 24 hours in advance unless, either before or after the meeting, the giving of such notice is waived by all entitled to receive it. Minutes of such meetings shall be circulated within a reasonable time thereafter.
 - iv. A resolution in writing, signed by all the Members entitled to vote on that resolution at a meeting of the Members of the Executive, shall be as valid as if passed at a meeting thereof.

12. ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- a) There shall be an advisory committee to the Council known as the "Advisory Committee" composed of the deputy ministers of the Provincial and Territorial Members of the Council and the Director General.
- b) A deputy minister may be represented at a meeting of the Advisory Committee by an official from his or her ministry/department, and such representative shall have the right to vote.
- c) A deputy minister may be accompanied at meetings by such officials of his or her ministry/department or advisors as he or she deems appropriate.
- d) The successor in office of a deputy minister replaces the former deputy minister on the Advisory Committee.
- e) The deputy minister of the Chair of the Council is ex officio the Chair of the Advisory Committee and where there is more than one deputy minister for the Chair of the Council, the Chair of the Council shall designate the deputy minister who shall be the Chair of the Advisory Committee.
- f) Where the Executive has decided upon an Acting Chair of the Council the deputy minister of such Provincial Member is ex officio the Chair of the Advisory Committee.
- g) The Council may from time to time by resolution delegate to the Advisory Committee any or all of the Council's powers, whether in respect of a specific matter under consideration or whether in respect of certain classes of matters generally. In particular, the Advisory Committee shall,

- i. bring forward for consideration by the Council issues in respect of which it is anticipated that the Council may be required to formulate policies and proposals;
- ii. where practicable, review all matters to be presented to the Council;
- iii. make recommendations for action regarding matters to be presented to the Council; and
- iv. prepare the agenda for the Council meetings and initiate the preparation of required documentation.

The Advisory Committee may subdelegate to a subcommittee of its members any or all of the Advisory Committee's powers. Subject to approval of the Council, the Advisory Committee may subdelegate to the Director General any matters delegated to it by the Council. The Director General may act on such matters with the agreement of the Chair and two other members of the Advisory Committee, after having polled and received comments from all members of the Advisory Committee.

- h) The Advisory Committee shall meet prior to a meeting of the Council on the day fixed by the Chair of the Advisory Committee and other meetings may be called,
 - i. at the request of the Chair of the Council;
 - ii. at the request of three members, a majority of whom shall be Provincial Members; or
 - iii. at the request of the Chair of the Advisory Committee.
- i) The Chair of the Advisory Committee shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Committee or in his or her absence the Director General, and where both are unable to attend, the meeting shall be postponed to a day fixed by the Chair of the Advisory Committee.
- j) One half of the number of members of the Advisory Committee at any time constitutes a quorum and for such purpose and subject to 12h) a designate of a member of the Advisory Committee shall be deemed to be a member of the Advisory Committee.
- k) If all the members of the Advisory Committee present at or participating in the meeting consent, a meeting of the Advisory Committee or of any subcommittee thereof may be held by means of such telephone, electronic or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously, and a member participating in such a meeting by such means shall be deemed to be present at such meeting. Minutes of such meetings shall be circulated within a reasonable time thereafter.
- l) A resolution in writing, signed by all the members entitled to vote on that resolution at a meeting of the Advisory Committee or of any subcommittee thereof, shall be as valid as if it were passed at a meeting thereof, as the case may be.

13. CORPORATION

There shall be a body corporate, THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA/LA CORPORATION DU CONSEIL DES MINISTRES DE L'ÉDUCATION, CANADA, hereinafter referred to as the "Corporation", incorporated under the laws of the province of Ontario to provide the services of a secretariat of the Council and to carry out such duties as may from time to time be assigned to it by the Council and, for greater certainty, but not so as to restrict the generality of the foregoing, to assist the Council, the Executive, the Advisory Committee, committees and task forces by providing central office liaison and research, coordination, administration and distribution of materials. In hiring of Secretariat personnel, the bilingual principle will be observed, and adequate provision made for the use of both English and French in the work of the Council.

14. APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR GENERAL

- a) The Council shall appoint an officer to be known as the Director General who shall be chief executive officer of the Council and its treasurer and shall hold the office of secretary of the Corporation and be ex officio a member of each committee or task force of the Council.
- b) The Council shall fix and pay the remuneration of the Director General and his or her expenses incurred in the course of his or her duties and he or she shall hold office on an annual basis at pleasure of the Council, and the Council, in consultation with the Director General, shall employ and pay such officers and servants of the Corporation as may be required for the proper performance of its objects.
- c) In addition to the powers held under 11f) and 12g), the Director General shall have the following powers and duties:
 - i. provide liaison among the Members;
 - ii. when requested by the Council or the Executive, represent the Council in negotiations with authorities of the Government of Canada or of any Provincial or any Territorial Member;
 - iii. when requested by the Council or the Executive, represent the Council at international education events;
 - iv. organize country-wide services in the field of education through committees or task forces of the Council;
 - v. administer through the Corporation programs of joint federal/provincial/territorial participation;
 - vi. ensure that liaison exists with such educational, professional or other organizations, as may be approved by the Council;
 - vii. bring forward for consideration by the Executive or the Advisory Committee, as the case may be, or, where appropriate, on his or her own initiative bring forward for consideration by the Council issues in respect of which it is anticipated that the Council may be required to formulate policies and proposals.
- d) The Director General may designate an officer of the Corporation to attend meetings of the committees and task forces of the Council and an officer so designated shall be deemed to be ex officio a member of such committee or task force.
- e) The Director General shall keep a full and accurate account of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Corporation, shall deposit all the monies in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in such bank as may be designated by the Executive, shall disburse the funds as may be ordered and, in accordance with good business practice, take appropriate vouchers for disbursements and render to the Chair of the Council as required, an account of all his or her transactions as Treasurer and of the financial position of the Corporation.

15. RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS

Having regard to the responsibilities of a minister of the Crown, no resolution or motion of the Council other than those dealing exclusively with the internal operations of the Council is binding upon Her Majesty in right of any province or territory or commits to specific action any individual Member of the Council except as may be provided by any enactment of the province or territory of which the Member is a minister of the Crown.

16. FINANCES

- a) The monies required by the Council and approved in the form of a budget shall be provided on the basis of a formula determined by the Council.
- b) The budget shall be reviewed and approved annually by the Council following consideration and recommendations with respect thereto by the Advisory Committee and the Executive.
- c) The Executive has authority to make adjustments during the year within the total budget as approved by the Council.
- d) The fiscal year of the Council will end on March 31.
- e) The books and records of the Council shall be audited annually by auditors appointed by the Council.

17. EXPENSES OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE MEETINGS

Members of the Council and members of the Advisory Committee shall not receive remuneration for their services, but, as approved by the Council, Members shall be reimbursed for their travelling and living expenses that are incurred in respect of services performed for the Council or the Advisory Committee, as the case may be.

18. COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

- a) The Council and the Executive may establish committees and task forces, whose membership need not be limited to Members, for the study of any matter that may be of interest to the Council, and for such purpose, the Council or the Executive, as the case may be, shall determine the terms of reference, and the number and location of committee and task force meetings in accordance with the scope of the task and the limitation of the budget.
- b) Committee and task force membership shall be approved by the Executive and as far as practicable provide for regional representation.
- c) Unless otherwise ordered by the Council, each committee and task force is considered to be appointed for a term of not more than twelve months.

19. AMENDMENTS IN THE AGREED MEMORANDUM

Amendments as agreed upon by Provincial Members of the Council may be made from time to time in this Agreed Memorandum.

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
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81996 Council of Ministers of Education, Canada ISBN 0-88987-097-7

APPENDIX C

**LETTERS AND QUESTIONNAIRES SENT TO MINISTERS,
FEDERAL OFFICIALS AND NGOS**

Letter to Ministers

August 21, 2003
The Honourable [Name]
Minister
[Name of department or ministry]
[address]

Dear Minister,

As you know, ministers agreed at their April 2003 meeting in London to undertake a review of the mission and mandate of CMEC. Since then, the terms of reference have been finalized, and the review team has met to develop a detailed work plan for the project.

Beginning in late August 2003, the Canadian members of the review team, Mr. Raymond Daigle and Ms. Lyn Tait, will begin their consultations with members of CMEC. Secretariat staff will contact your office in the coming days to determine a convenient date and time for your meeting. The main questions that will be posed by the review team during the meeting are enclosed. The reviewers hope to meet with as many jurisdictions as possible prior to our CMEC meeting in St. John's on September 30–October 1, 2003.

The review team has suggested the following format for these consultations: a meeting with the minister and his or her deputy minister, followed by a meeting with the deputy minister and other senior staff. If you feel other arrangements would be more convenient for you, please do not hesitate to suggest them.

I look forward to seeing you in St. John's for the 84th CMEC meeting.

Sincerely,

Kevin Costante
Chair, ACDME

Enc.

REVIEW OF CMEC

CONSULTATIONS WITH MINISTERS

CMEC mandate and leadership

1. How should the provinces and territories exercise leadership at the pan-Canadian and international levels?
2. How can CMEC members move beyond individual political and philosophical agendas in order to advance priorities on a pan-Canadian as well as an international basis?
3. How can CMEC enhance its strategic capacity?
4. What do you think the priorities of CMEC should be?
5. What types of activities should CMEC focus on? What types of activities should it not focus on?
6. What do you see as the key challenges for CMEC to move forward?
7. Do you know of any examples of cross-jurisdictional coordination internationally or in other sectors in Canada from which CMEC could learn?

Relationship with the federal government

1. Should there be a relationship between CMEC and the federal government? If so, what type of relationship should it be? How should it be coordinated and structured? Should it be with particular federal departments?
2. How can CMEC become more effective in influencing federal policy and program directions that impact education and postsecondary education?

Relationship with NGOs

1. What role should NGOs play in the development of education policy in Canada?
2. What should CMEC's relationship be with NGOs? How should that relationship be coordinated and structured?

CMEC decision-making processes

1. Are there changes you would like to propose to the duties and/or powers of CMEC (see the outline of duties and powers in the Agreement Memorandum, a copy of which is attached here)?
2. Are there changes you would like to propose to the current decision-making processes for CMEC?
3. What are your views on the role and powers of the Executive Committee?
4. Do you think the current role and mandate of the Director General is appropriate? Do you have suggestions for changes that would make the position more effective?

CMEC Secretariat

1. Is a permanent Secretariat the most effective administrative and coordinating body to serve CMEC?
2. If so, how could the efficiency of the current Secretariat be improved?
3. If not, are there other models of administrative and coordinating bodies that could support the mandate and activities of CMEC?

Letter to Federal Officials

August 26, 2003
Mr. / Ms [Name]
[Title]
[Department or Ministry]
[Address]

Dear Mr./Ms [Name],

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME) of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) to invite you to share your views on the mission and mandate of our organization.

Since it was founded in 1967, CMEC has been the mechanism through which ministers share information and act on matters of mutual interest, consult and cooperate with national education organizations and the federal government, and represent the education interests of the provinces and territories internationally. In response to the many challenges facing education in Canada, ministers of education agreed at their spring 2003 meeting that it was time to review the mission and mandate of CMEC in order to establish a framework for the organization's future and a foundation for its renewal.

A team of three experts has been engaged to undertake the project. Mr. Raymond Daigle and Ms. Lyn Tait are both former senior public servants who have extensive experience in the field of Canadian education. Mr. Barry McGaw is a former professor of education and the current Director for Education at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). He will provide us with an invaluable international perspective on CMEC.

The members of the review team would like to meet with senior federal officials, preferably during the week of October 13, 2003, when all three reviewers will be in Ottawa. CMEC staff will contact your office in the coming days to confirm your interest in participating in the review and to find a convenient date and time for the meeting. The main questions that will be posed by the review team during the meeting are enclosed.

The members of the review team hope you will share your views on CMEC and on education in Canada. Ministers of education believe that this exchange of views with the federal government is an important part of the review process and will make a positive contribution to the renewal of CMEC.

Sincerely,

Kevin Costante
Chair, ACDME

Enc.

REVIEW OF CMEC

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH SENIOR FEDERAL OFFICIALS

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) is a voluntary grouping of the ministers responsible for education in the provinces and territories of Canada. It was created in 1967 through the approval of the *Agreed Memorandum on a Council of Ministers of Education, Canada* by all the provincial governments. The territories became members in the 1990s.

According to the Agreed Memorandum,

The purposes of the Council are to enable the ministers to consult on such matters as are of common interest, to provide a means for the fullest possible cooperation among Provincial and Territorial Member governments in areas of mutual interest and concern in education and to cooperate with other educational organizations to promote the development of education in Canada.

CMEC is now seeking an appraisal of its future mission, objectives, and capabilities. CMEC wishes such an appraisal to establish a framework for the organization's future and foundation for renewal.

As the external reviewers who have been asked to undertake the review of CMEC, we would appreciate your views on the organization based on the following questions:

1. What do you see as the appropriate mission and mandate of CMEC?
2. What activities should it focus on? What activities should it not focus on?
3. Do you know of any examples of cross-jurisdictional coordination internationally or in other sectors in Canada from which CMEC could learn?
4. What suggestions do you have to help CMEC become more effective in influencing federal policy/program directions that impact education and postsecondary education?
5. To achieve this, what type of relationship should exist between CMEC and the federal government? How should it be structured?
6. With which federal departments should CMEC have ongoing relationships (recognizing that relevant issues/program areas are dispersed among a number of federal departments)? How can this be done in a coordinated way?
7. Do you have any other comments to make regarding the mission and mandate of CMEC?

Letter to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's)

August 26, 2003

[Name]

[Title]

[Organization]

[Address]

Dear [Mr. / Ms (Name)],

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME) of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) to invite [Name of organization] to participate in a review of the mission and mandate of our organization.

Since it was founded in 1967, CMEC has been the mechanism through which ministers share information and act on matters of mutual interest, consult and cooperate with national education organizations and the federal government, and represent the education interests of the provinces and territories internationally. In response to the many challenges facing education in Canada, ministers of education agreed at their spring 2003 meeting that it was time to review the mission and mandate of CMEC in order to establish a framework for the organization's future and a foundation for its renewal.

A team of three experts has been engaged to undertake the review. Mr. Raymond Daigle and Ms. Lyn Tait are both former senior public servants who have extensive experience in the field of education in Canada. Mr. Barry McGaw is a former professor of education and the current Director for Education at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). He will provide us with an invaluable international perspective on CMEC.

Enclosed is a questionnaire prepared by the reviewers that invites your comments and suggestions on the future mission and mandate of CMEC. The reviewers would welcome your input to the specific questions and hope that you will take this opportunity to provide any other observations that you feel may be relevant to their work. They will need to receive your submissions by September 30, 2003.

We would sincerely appreciate receiving your views on CMEC and on education in Canada. Ministers of education believe that consultations with organizations such as [Name of organization] are an integral part of the review process and will make a positive contribution to the renewal of CMEC.

Yours truly,

Kevin Costante
Chair, ACDME

Enc.

REVIEW OF CMEC

CONSULTATIONS WITH NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) is a voluntary grouping of the ministers responsible for education in the provinces and territories of Canada. It was created in 1967 through the approval of the *Agreed Memorandum on a Council of Ministers of Education, Canada* by all the provincial governments. The territories became members in the 1990s.

According to the Agreed Memorandum,

The purposes of the Council are to enable the ministers to consult on such matters as are of common interest, to provide a means for the fullest possible cooperation among Provincial and Territorial Member governments in areas of mutual interest and concern in education and to cooperate with other educational organizations to promote the development of education in Canada.

CMEC is now seeking an appraisal of its future mission, objectives, and capabilities. CMEC wishes such an appraisal to establish a framework for the organization's future and foundation for renewal.

The external reviewers who have been asked to undertake the review of CMEC would appreciate your views on the organization based on the following questions.

1. What do you see as the appropriate mission and mandate of CMEC?
2. Do you think CMEC is presently playing a leadership role in education in Canada?
3. How should the provinces and territories exercise leadership at both the pan-Canadian and international levels?
4. What do you think the priorities of CMEC should be?
5. What types of activities should CMEC focus on? What types of activities should it not focus on?
6. Are there examples of best practices in cross-jurisdictional coordination internationally or in other sectors in Canada from which CMEC should learn?
7. What type of relationship should CMEC have with NGOs?
8. What role do you think national NGOs should have in the development of education policy?
9. Do you have any other comments to make regarding the mission and mandate of CMEC?

Please return by September 30, 2003, to
Ms. Francine Lecoupe, Toronto, Ontario

APPENDIX D

REVIEW OF CMEC

Analysis of Existing Ministerial Groupings in Canada

A survey of existing ministerial groupings in Canada was conducted through internet research and telephone discussions with secretariat personnel. Information was compiled on:

- Mission and mandate
- Background to formation of the group
- Relationship to the federal government
- Structure
- Secretariat
- Decision-making process
- Activities and accomplishments
- Current lead province and contacts
- Current challenges
- CMEC involvement

The following groups were investigated:

Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment

Canadian Council of Forest Ministers

Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade

Forum of Labour Market Ministers

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT (CCME)

Mission and Mandate	CCME works to promote effective intergovernmental cooperation and coordinated approaches to interjurisdictional issues. CCME members collectively establish nationally consistent environmental standards, strategies, and objectives to achieve a high level of environmental quality across the country.
Background	The Council of Resource Ministers (CREM) was formed shortly after a national conference on resource issues in 1964. In the early 70's, Resource Ministers merged with Environment Ministers to form the Council of Resource and Environment Ministers. In the 80's, as the result of a strategic review, the by-laws of CREM were retooled. The new focus was on environment, with forestry, wildlife, parks and fisheries interests branching off to form individual working groups.
Relationship to Federal Government	The federal government is an equal member of CCME through Environment Canada. Although some tension can occur due to the uneven staffing and ability of the members in relation to the federal government, CCME strives to operate on a collaborative model.
Structure	<p>The Management Committee of CCME Inc. is a Board of Directors composed of the current, past, up-coming chairs as well as the chair of the Environmental Planning and Protection Committee and an Environment Canada representative. Environment ministers from all jurisdictions and the federal government meet at least once a year.</p> <p>In between meetings, the work of the Council is managed by a Deputy Ministers Committee and a Secretariat. The Environmental Planning and Protection Committee is a permanent intergovernmental steering committee which works with several Task Groups on specific products and policy issues.</p> <p>The Presidency of the Council rotates annually in late November among member governments.</p>
The Secretariat	<p>CCME's permanent, full-time secretariat is located at:</p> <p>123 Main Street, Suite 360 Winnipeg, MB R3C 1A3 Phone: (204) 948-2090 Fax: (204) 948-2125 E-mail: info@ccme.ca</p> <p>Carl Hrenchuk is the Executive Director.</p> <p>The size of the Secretariat has varied from a low of 1 or 2 in the early 1980's to a high of 17 in the 1993 due to fluctuations in contributions from the members and the relative importance given to intergovernmental cooperation on environmental matters. The median size of the Secretariat is about 8, which is the size of the current staff. There are two senior staff members, the Executive Director and a Director of Corporate Services, three coordinators, 1 program officer and 2 administrative assistants.</p>

Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) CONT...

Decision-making Processes	Consensus decision-making is one of CCME's basic operating principles. While it proposes change, CCME does not impose its suggestions on its members since it has no authority to implement or enforce legislation. Each jurisdiction decides whether to adopt CCME proposals.
Activities and Accomplishments Current Lead Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan 2003-2006 describes specific areas targeted for action, associated accomplishments and desired outcomes • Strategic review of CCME in 2001 (see Business Plan on web site) • CCME Pollution Prevention Awards • As part of the Canada-Wide Accord on Environmental Harmonization (1998 – not endorsed by Quebec): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 bilateral agreements • Canada-wide standards to protect the health of Canadians through improved air quality • Revised and integrated Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines • Policy on the Management of Toxic Substances • Canadian Water Quality Guidelines • Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines
Contacts	<p>British Columbia President of CCME: Hon. Joyce Murray, Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection Up-coming lead: Nova Scotia Gordon Macatee, Chair of Deputy Ministers' Committee (250) 387-5429</p>
Current Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continuity and flexibility</i> of the ministerial table, and to a lesser extent of the deputy ministerial table. At any of the annual meetings, there can be 30% new ministers. Some of the public political agreements like the Harmonization Accords are 5 to 10 year commitments. It is a challenge to maintain a sustained level of enthusiasm and direction, and an ongoing buy-in of current and future agendas. • <i>Political hurdles</i>. It is difficult in a collaborative model to identify the successes that individual ministers can present to their electorate. It can be difficult to communicate results and to show the value of achievements specially if they are technical and not politically 'sexy'. • <i>Changing priorities</i>. Current economic and health issues dominate provincial, territorial and federal agendas. In the 1990's sustainable development meant a meshing of economic and environmental goals. But ideas and perceptions have retrenched so that currently, economic and environment priorities are seen as incompatible.
CMEC Involvement	None at the moment.
Other	Major initiatives with Council of Energy Ministers

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF FOREST MINISTERS (CCFM)

Mission and Mandate	CCFM stimulates the development of policies and initiatives for strengthening the forest sector, including the forest resource and its use. It provides leadership, addresses national and international issues and sets the overall direction for stewardship and sustainable management of Canada's forests.
Background	Forest issues were once dealt with within the Council of Resource and Environment Ministers (CREM). After a strategic review of CREM, Ministers responsible for Forests decided in 1985 to form their own council to focus solely on forest-specific issues.
Relationship to Federal Government	The federal government is a full and equal member through the Department of Natural Resources.
Structure	<p>The Chair rotates annually between the provinces, territories and the federal government. CCFM meets at least once a year in the fall and the agenda for these meetings are set during the Deputy Ministers' meetings, which are held in the spring. In addition to annual meetings of Ministers and Deputies, the CCFM undertakes activities primarily through ad hoc fora, and committees and working groups. At present some 11 committees/working groups report to CCFM.</p> <p>The funding formula for the Council and associated initiatives is 1/3 federal funding and 2/3 provincial and territorial contributions based on their level of exports and contribution to GNP.</p>
The Secretariat	<p>The Secretariat for the Council resides with the chair and is responsible for the logistics of organizing and hosting the annual Ministers and Deputy Ministers meetings.</p> <p>The CCFM Secretariat is assisted by a 'phantom' secretariat at the Canadian Forest Services of Natural Resources Canada. One person works in this capacity to assist the provinces and territories in organizing the annual CCFM meetings and in briefing them on current and past issues. He also maintains the web site.</p> <p>Smaller provinces and territories require more assistance from Natural Resources Canada, whereas larger provinces are more independent. However, all meeting costs are borne by the individual jurisdictions chairing the CCFM.</p>
Decision-making Processes	The management of forests in Canada is the responsibility of the provinces and territories. CCFM decisions are made by consensus, but jurisdictions that choose not to participate in a particular project can withdraw financial support for that specific initiative.
Activities and Accomplishments	<p>Some of CCFM initiatives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Forestry Database Program • Science and Technology Working Group • Canadian Criteria and Indiciary Task Force • National Forest Information System Steering Committee • Forest 2020 Task Force • International Forestry Partnership Program

Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) CONT...

- International Forest Convention Working Group
- Aboriginal Forestry Working Group
- Private Woodlot Taxation Task Force
- Canadian Forestry Communicators Committee
- Certification Working Group

The CCFM was also hosted and organized the XII World Forestry Congress in Quebec City, September 21-28, 2003.

Current Lead Province	Yukon Hon. Archie Lang, Minister of the Yukon Department of Energy Mines and Resources
Contacts	Angus Robertson, Deputy Minister Tel: (867) 667-5417 Sylvain Caron, Senior Policy Advisor, Canadian Forestry Service, Natural Resources Canada. (scaron@nrca.gc.ca) Tel: (613) 947-0910
Current Challenges	The CCFM is reported to work harmoniously with all jurisdictions on board to address current issues and develop effective responses. Domestically, there have been occasional instances where responsibilities needed to be clearly identified, for example the federal government appears to have a lead in matters of science and technology; and sometimes new initiatives require a new influx of federal funds, and the jurisdictions lobby accordingly. Internationally, the challenge is for CCFM speak with one voice on issues such as sustainable development, forests on private land, aboriginal forestry, and so on.
CMEC Involvement	None
Other	Over the past three years, there have been annual half day Joint Ministerial Meetings of Ministers responsible for Forests, Wildlife, Parks, Fisheries, and Oceans. These are simply information sharing sessions. CCFM is unsupportive of the suggestion that all of these areas be regrouped, as was the case pre-1985 to form a new council of ministers. CCFM firmly believes that the only way to address forest issues effectively is to work exclusively on them and not wrestle for agenda time as was the case in the past.

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS ON INTERNAL TRADE

Mission and Mandate	The Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade oversees the implementation and operations of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT).
Background	<p>AIT established the Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade.</p> <p>AIT is an inter-governmental agreement to reduce and eliminate barriers to the free movement of people, goods, services and investments within Canada and to establish an open, efficient and stable domestic market. Signed in 1994 by the Federal, Provincial, Northwest Territories, and Yukon governments, AIT came into effect on July 1, 1995.</p>
Relationship to Federal Government	The federal government is a member through Industry Canada. The federal representative is a permanent co-chair, while the provincial co-chair rotates annually.
Structure	<p>The Committee meets about once per year to deal with major issues and review the progress of AIT. Conference calls are arranged to respond to complaints launched under the Dispute Resolution procedures of the agreement.</p> <p>Internal Trade Representatives meet 6 times per year.</p> <p>The Agreement creates committees to address specific tasks outlined in the Chapters of AIT, e.g., the Working Group on Investment; or assigns responsibility to existing groups, e.g., responsibility for the Labour Mobility Chapter was assigned to the Forum of Labour Market Ministers.</p>
The Secretariat	<p>The Internal Trade Secretariat is a non-governmental body created to provide operational and administrative support to all the governments in the implementation of the AIT. The Secretariat supports the Trade Representatives and the committees by coordinating their work programs and managing the dispute resolution process.</p> <p>The Secretariat is located at: 125 Garry St., Suite 850 Winnipeg, MB R3C 3P2 Phone: (204) 987-8090 Fax (204) 942-8460 E-mail info@intrasec.mb.ca</p> <p>Staff totals six, including an Executive Director, three policy advisors, and two administrative officers.</p>
Decision-making Processes	The AIT features a formal dispute settlement mechanism to deal with grievances. It is accessible to governments and the private sector.
Activities and Accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Canada – Challenges for Internal Trade and Mobility: a national conference featuring public consultations on internal trade held in Toronto in May 2001 • REGISTREX, an electronic gateway to facilitate extra-provincial corporate registration and reporting • MARCAN, a web site on tender notices for procurement opportunities within the Canadian public sector.

Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade CONT...

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing progress in implementing the chapters of the Agreement including Procurement, Investment, Labour Mobility, Consumer-Related Measures and Standards, Agricultural and Food Goods, Alcoholic Beverages, Natural Resource Processing, Energy, Communications, Transportation, Environmental Protection, Institutional Provisions, and Dispute Resolution Procedures.
Current Lead Province	Federal government and New Brunswick Co-Chairs: Hon. Allan Rock, Minister of Industry Canada and Hon. Peter Meshau, New Brunswick Ministry of Business
Contacts	Chris Charette, Director, Internal Trade and Outreach, Industry Canada Tel: (613) 946-7318 Harry Quinlan, Provincial Trade Representative, New Brunswick, Tel: (506) 444-5011
Current Challenges	Funding formula for funding the Secretariat is under review.
CMEC Involvement	The CMEC participates in the Labour Mobility Chapter through the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education Working Group. In 1995, a working group on teacher mobility was established. A Provisional Agreement in Principle to facilitate teacher mobility was approved by CMEC in 1999.
Other	Several pan-Canadian ministerial groupings are involved in implementing the AIT such as CMEC, CCME, the Council of Energy Ministers, and the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety.

FORUM OF LABOUR MARKET MINISTERS (FLMM)

Mission and Mandate	<p>FLMM's mandate is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote interjurisdictional cooperation on labour market issues and to provide a forum to establish and meet common goals. • Promote a highly skilled workforce with portable qualifications through the development and expansion of interprovincial standards. • Facilitate Canada's adaptation to changes in economic structure and skill requirements. • Provide an interjurisdictional link to participatory structures such as labour force development boards.
Background	<p>FLMM was established in 1983 to provide a mechanism for interjurisdictional discussion and co-operation on labour market matters.</p>
Relationship to Federal Government	<p>The Forum is co-chaired by the Federal Government through HRDC and the lead province, which rotates every two years on an east-to-west basis. However, the Secretariat, which is housed in the lead province, reports directly to the Intergovernmental Relations Unit of the Department of HRDC.</p>
Structure	<p>Task teams have been formed to address labour market issues, including a Labour Mobility Coordinating Group, formed to coordinate the implementation of the Labour Mobility Chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade and the Labour Mobility Information Group.</p>
The Secretariat	<p>The lead province houses the secretariat, which reports to HRDC.</p> <p>The Nova Scotia Department of Education's Skills and Learning Branch has taken responsibility for FLMM Secretariat for 2 years as of April 2003. Funding is evenly split between the federal government and the provinces and territories (on a pro-rated basis).</p> <p>Staff consists of a lead-province Director, a senior policy analyst and an administrative assistant.</p>
Decision-making Processes	<p>Consensus-based. Quebec currently has observer status.</p>
Activities and Accomplishments	<p>Federal/Provincial/Territorial Policy Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Market Information • Seasonal Workers • Older Worker Adjustment • Labour Mobility Coordinating Group • Aboriginal Labour Market Matters • Labour Shortages • Strategic Planning Group <p>Provincial and Territorial Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EI Allocation Review • Skills Development <p>Research and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Market Research Forum • Evaluation Research Forum

Forum of Labour Market Ministers CONT...

Current Leads	Federal government (HRDC) and Nova Scotia Co-chairs: Hon. Jane Stewart, HRDC and Hon. Jamie Muir, Nova Scotia Minister of Education.
Contacts	Claire Paris Director of Intergovernmental Relations Unit Human Resources Development Canada Tel.: (819) 953-8561 Maureen O'Connell Director, FLMM Secretariat Nova Scotia Department of Education Tel.: (902) 424-5380
Current Challenges	The Secretariat is moving ahead on the tasks identified at the Labour Market Ministers conference in Halifax in June 2003. Since each region of Canada has its own specific labour market circumstances, it can be difficult to move beyond regional issues to reach agreement on pan-Canadian initiatives and to simply coordinate all of the jurisdictions from a logistical point of view.
CMEC Involvement	CMEC has been active in this dossier.
Other	

APPENDIX E

VICTORIA DECLARATION 1993

JOINT DECLARATION

September 28, 1993

Future Directions for The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)

Introduction

Education in Canada is a provincial responsibility as outlined in the Constitution. This responsibility has its roots before Confederation. The evolution of our approach to education, in response to cultural and regional identities, as well as provincial realities, is one of the most vital manifestations of our democratic society. We place a high value on developing and adapting policies for our education systems to the needs of Canada and its various regions and communities, and on administering programs at the local level, close to the people served by these systems.

The fact remains, however, that all Canadians also have certain common expectations of education. While our current education systems are already attempting in many ways to meet the challenges of modern society, when faced with common problems, it is clearly in our interest to adopt a national approach in dealing with them.

We are all well aware of the challenges to the education systems posed by our rapidly changing world: globalization of the economy, openness with regard to other cultures, pressing needs for skilled labour, technological advances that are having an impact on our daily lives as well as the job market. These changes require constant adjustments to our educational practices to ensure high quality, accessibility, mobility and accountability. Across the country, Canadians are facing similar challenges and they see the need for educational goals to be set and attained in Canada, in a coherent and cooperative manner.

Canadians want access to education and credit for learning and experience to be extended more consistently on a national basis across provincial, territorial or institutional boundaries. Canadians are also concerned with promoting more flexible relationships between education and the world of work. The changes the world is currently experiencing call for readjustment of outdated linkages and relationships.

A National Education Agenda

The Premiers, at their annual meeting in Baddeck in August 1993, adopted a clearly defined position acknowledging the CMEC's responsibility to meet these challenges. They gave their "full support to the CMEC to provide leadership for change and to provide the strong national voice for education in Canada".

The CMEC will take action in accordance with this endorsement. The ministers responsible for education hold the following beliefs in common:

We believe that education is a lifelong learning process. We also believe that the future of our society depends on informed and educated citizens who, while fulfilling their own goals of personal and professional development, contribute to the social, economic, and cultural development of their community and of the country as a whole. Beyond our borders, Canadian education should reflect the priorities of Canadians while contributing to strengthening Canada's place internationally.

We share many common educational goals and we agree to ensure greater harmonization of the ways we set about achieving them. There is already in place a vast range of educational opportunities across Canada that should be fully accessible to individual learners. We jointly want to have the highest quality education based on shared and relevant goals, and to demonstrate accountability for achieving them.

Above all, we want all citizens to have a fair and equitable opportunity in whatever educational and training endeavours they may pursue.

More specifically, CMEC's actions will focus on the following four themes, which we see as crucial in the coming years: quality of education, accountability, accessibility, and mobility.

Action plan

Our objective, as Ministers of Education, is therefore to ensure the provision of quality education to all. This will be done by way of the collective and individual actions that we have decided to take.

We are embarking on an action plan to address education concerns now and into the next century. This plan must involve national cooperation, in the context of lifelong learning, with all of our partners — students, parents, educators, trustees, education organizations, federations and institutions, business and labour, as well as appropriate federal departments and agencies.

The action plan will build on the many current best practices and education successes that exist across the country.

We are placing a priority on the following activities:

- establishment of a national work group to examine curriculum comparability and possible joint initiatives in curriculum development;
- The creation of two inter-provincial teams is already preparing the way for broader cooperation. The Atlantic provinces have begun to explore a regional approach to common core curriculum and the western provinces have given priority to expanding the draft Western Canadian Protocol for Curriculum Collaboration.
- continuation and expansion of the current School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), adding science to reading, writing and mathematics;
- a new joint CMEC/Statistics Canada project to develop pan-Canadian indicators of education performance, including such measurements as completion rates for all levels of education, successful transition to work, and student, educator, and public satisfaction;
- a new Canada-wide focus on open learning and distance education, particularly in postsecondary education. We will begin with an inventory of policies and practices throughout the country in this area;
- development of new linkages and partnerships with students, parents, educators, trustees, education organizations, federations and institutions, business and labour, as well as appropriate federal departments and agencies;
- provide leadership for a pan-Canadian conference on education priorities and joint initiatives, with all partners, building on successful education practice and innovation.

This action plan will be achieved through a new national agenda in which all will participate in ways that reflect provincial and territorial priorities.

Leadership in Education

We, the Ministers of Education of the provinces and territories, through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, unanimously affirm our responsibility for providing national leadership in education in Canada. While individual provinces and territories remain responsible for education in

their jurisdictions, there has never been a greater need for joint action. We believe that our collective will to work together will create a synergy that will benefit each province.

We are also committed to exploring with the federal government ways to achieve effective and fruitful cooperation.

We reiterate our commitment to working with all of our partners. We count on their participation and invite them to work with us in the best interests of education in Canada and our future as Canadians.

APPENDIX F

VICTORIA DECLARATION 1999

JOINT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

**Shared Priorities in Education at the Dawn of the 21st Century
Future Directions for The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
September 1999**

Leadership in education

We, the ministers responsible for education unanimously reaffirm our responsibility for providing leadership in education at the pan-Canadian level through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. While the provinces and territories remain responsible for education in their jurisdictions, there continues to be a need for joint action. We believe that our collective will to work together will create a synergy that will benefit each province and territory.

Why we need to work together

As ministers responsible for education, we are committed to providing the highest possible quality of education to citizens at every stage of their lives. We place a high value on developing and adapting education policies for the needs of regions and communities, and on administering programs at the local level, close to the people served by the education systems.

Residents of all provinces and territories, however, recognize that, when faced with the same challenges, it is often in their own interest to work together to address them. We are aware of the challenges that continue to be posed by our rapidly changing world: youth unemployment, the development of a knowledge economy, economic globalization, and technological advances that are having an impact on our daily lives, as well as the job market. In all regions, there are similar challenges and, as a result, the desire for provinces and territories to work together in a cooperative manner.

Provinces and territories will collaborate on shared priorities through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Sharing our perspectives on particular issues will enhance our ability to reach creative solutions and to add value to what we are doing in our respective jurisdictions.

Values and beliefs

We believe that education is a lifelong learning process and that we must continue to strive to create a learning society in which the acquisition, renewal, and use of knowledge are cherished. We also believe that the future of our society depends on informed and educated citizens who, while fulfilling their own goals of personal and professional development, also contribute to social and economic progress. On the international scene, our activities should reflect these values and our priorities, while contributing to strengthening our role globally. Above all, we want all citizens to have a fair and equitable opportunity in whatever educational and training endeavours they may pursue.

Priorities for joint action

While our specific action plan may change from time to time, for the next five years, our work together through CMEC will be carried out in the following priority areas:

- Focussing on education outcomes
- Sharing information on best practices

- Collaborating on curriculum initiatives
- Promoting policy-related research
- Strengthening the postsecondary sector and increasing access
- Supporting international activities
- Promoting mobility
- Enhancing CMEC as a forum for effective and fruitful cooperation with the federal government

Our work must involve cooperation with our partners — students, parents, educators, trustees, education organizations, federations and institutions, business and labour, the Forum of Labour-Market Ministers, aboriginal governments, and where appropriate, certain federal departments and agencies. All cooperative activities must be carried out in the full respect of the jurisdiction of the various partners. In most cases, this work will involve all members of CMEC, but sometimes the programs or projects will be carried out by a group of members that does not necessarily include all provinces and territories. Our actions will continue to be guided by five themes: accountability, quality of education, accessibility, mobility, and responsiveness to learner needs.

APPENDIX G

EXCERPTS FROM: PORTRAIT OF CANADA

Taken from the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) website – Vol. 5, No. 38 - October 30, 2003

ON FILE

Health, education and improved federal-provincial cooperation

The 2003 edition of Portraits of Canada looks at how Canadians see things. It identifies the priorities that they have for the next Prime Minister. It looks at how Canadians feel about the state of their federation, providing an insight into the state of mind of Canadians in all regions. For the first time, the survey included the three northern territories. Some of the main findings of this year's survey are presented in this edition of Opinion Canada.

ON FILE

Health, education and improved federal-provincial cooperation

Canadians in every part of the country have three top priorities for the next Prime Minister: more spending on health care (73%); improved federal-provincial cooperation (70%); and increased funding of education and training (69%).

And a plurality (48%) want the new Prime Minister to put reform of the country's political institutions at the top of the political agenda, making them more open and democratic. However, there is little support for using constitutional reform as a vehicle of change.

These are central findings of the 2003 edition of Portraits.

Health, education and federal-provincial cooperation were identified as the top three priorities in every province and territory. And they topped the list for Canadians in the country's five largest cities. None of the other choices on a list of 12 came close to these three.

Regionally, the number saying that spending more money on health care should be a high priority ranged from 83% in the North and 82% in the Atlantic provinces, to 66% in the West.

Respondents were asked the following question: "As you may know, Canada will soon have a new prime minister. When it comes to helping the country work better, please tell me if you think each of the following should be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority for the new prime minister."

Federal-provincial cooperation

Canadians are sending a message to both federal and provincial political leaders by identifying increased federal-provincial cooperation as a top priority and calling for more spending on health and education. They are saying that they expect political decision-makers to set aside their differences to find ways to deliver improved programs and services. Currently, only 42% of Canadians think the two levels of government are working well together. And, most importantly, a clear majority (70%) think that both the federal and provincial levels of government are equally to blame when conflicts occur.

The democratic deficit

When 48% of Canadians cite, as a high priority, "making significant changes to our political institutions to make them much more open and democratic", it shows that the desire for reform is fairly widespread.

Democratic reform is a higher priority for Canadians than improving relations between Canada and the US (41%), cutting taxes (41%), reducing regional economic inequalities (40%), reforming the Senate (36%), transferring more powers from the federal to the provincial governments (32%), spending more money on the military (30%), and giving more money to the country's big cities (16%).

"The high figures for making democratic reform a priority show that Canadians are concerned about the state of their democracy. Health and education touch Canadians very directly, so it is not surprising that they are top priorities. Improving federal-provincial relations and the way democracy works are much more abstract and technical. That they score so high underscores some real dissatisfaction with the way governments make decisions," says Dr. Matthew Mendelsohn, Associate Professor of Political Studies at Queen's University, and one of the directors of the Portraits study.

Social program spending gains support

Answers to other questions asked in the survey reinforce the conclusions that spending on health care and education remain Canadians' top priority. When asked about what governments should do with any budget surpluses they might have, 40% of Canadians say that any budget surpluses should be spent on social programs, compared with 37% who prefer to pay down government debt, and 22% who favour tax cuts. The number that supports spending the surplus on social programs has increased steadily over the last four years, while the number favouring tax cuts has been falling.

When respondents were asked a version of this question that specified that the increased spending would be devoted specifically to health care and education, the results were even more striking. Fully 63% favour using budget surpluses to put more money into social programs like health care and education, compared with 24% who would pay down the debt, and only 12% who would prefer tax cuts.

When asked about how best to deal with rising health care costs, a majority across Canada (52%) says governments should increase health care spending, rather than allow private companies to deliver some services to those who can afford them. Nationally, 37% favour involving the private sector while 9% would limit the availability of some treatments and medications.

However, the difference of opinion between Quebecers and other Canadians on this issue, first detected last year, persists. A majority of Quebecers now supports allowing private companies to provide some services to those who can afford them. In 2001, 38% of Quebecers felt this way. The number increased to 49% last year and to 53% this year.

APPENDIX H

EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN OTHER FEDERATIONS, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND OECD

Germany

Constitutional authority

In the Federal Republic of Germany, unless the Basic Law awards legislative power to the federation, the Länder have the right to legislate. The federal government's responsibilities are defined to include: the general principles of higher education; in-company vocational education and training education; training assistance; legal protection of students in correspondence courses; and regulations on entry to the legal, medical and paramedical professions. The federal government also has responsibility for setting salaries and pensions for teachers, since they are civil servants. Silence thus preserves for the Länder responsibility for pre-school, school, higher education, and adult and continuing education in all other respects.

A federal Ministry of Education and Science was created in 1969, when an amendment to the Basic Law gave additional responsibilities in education to the federal government. It was then merged in 1995 with the federal Ministry of Research and Technology and became the federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Practical authority

Practical authority generally conforms to the constitutional arrangements. The federal authorities have some capacity to intervene, even at the school level where they have no constitutional authority, through federal funding of initiatives. Such initiatives can proceed, however, only if cooperation can be negotiated with the Länder authorities.

Collaboration among jurisdictions

School education

Common structures for the school systems of the Länder were adopted by the Länder Ministers in 1964. Their agreement established common age of commencement and duration of full-time schooling, starting and ending dates for the school year, duration of school holidays, designation of educational institutions, recognition of examinations and scales for reporting of student results. More recent decisions cover: standards required for German, mathematics, and foreign languages; structure of upper secondary education; teacher education; and mutual recognition of teachers.

The federal government has little involvement in school-level education, except where it uses its financing provisions to grant funds for specific purposes. A current example is a federal initiative on whole-day schools, through which the federal government is seeking to promote an extension of the time students spend at school, despite schooling being a Länder responsibility. An earlier, though still recent, example was a federal initiative on lifelong learning advanced as a program for the promotion of 'learning regions' in which education and training policies are linked closely with other social and economic policies and the relevant institutions are encouraged to work together. All funding, in that case, came from federal or European sources, but participating regions were required to advance proposals to establish sustainable structures that would endure when outside funding ended. In other cases, shared funding in varying proportions between the federal and Länder authorities was negotiated.

Vocational and higher education

Länder Ministers have cooperatively established a common structure for vocational and higher

education. This cooperation has led to agreements on the content and structure of courses and examinations. Since the federal government is responsible for in-company vocational education and training and the Länder are responsible for training provided in vocational schools, federal-Länder cooperation is required for all courses that require both.

Ministerial Councils and subsidiary bodies

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kulturminister-Konferenz* [KMK]) was established to achieve sufficient harmonization of education throughout Germany to facilitate mobility of individuals within the country for professional and personal purposes. KMK deals with policy issues in school and higher education, research and cultural affairs that are supra-regional, and seeks a common view. Decisions require consensus and implementation requires action, including legislative action where necessary, in the Länder. The federal Minister is not a member of KMK, but attends as a guest from time to time.

The body responsible for cooperation between the federation and the Länder in education is the Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (*Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung* [BLK]). It was established in 1970 by an administrative agreement between the federal and Länder governments, with responsibility for educational planning and its role and title extended in 1976 to include the promotion of research. The federal and Länder Ministers of Education are members of BLK, but only a few Länder Ministers attend. On the federal side, Ministers with other relevant portfolios also participate, for example, those concerned with economic and employment policies.

The BLK provides a forum for discussion of issues of common interest, from which recommendations are submitted to the heads of the federal and Länder governments. It has separate committees to deal with educational planning and research promotion. The work has focused on innovations, such as the use of media in higher education, the promotion of women in science, the development of strategies to facilitate entry into the labour market of disadvantaged, school leavers, and the development of the regional role of vocational education institutions. Decisions are reached by majority vote, with votes weighted 50:50 between the federal government and the Länder collectively. This means that the federal government can win a vote with the support of one of the Länder.

The KMK and BLK tend to operate in parallel rather than cooperatively. If one takes an initiative, the other tends to keep out of that area. Outside the education policy domain, there are bodies having both federal and Länder Ministers as members.

In 1999, the federal and Länder governments established an education forum (*Forum Bildung*) but it was closed down in 2001. Its members were the Ministers for Education and Science and representatives from social partners, churches, trainees, and students. The forum conducted a general public discussion of education in all areas of education that affect both the Länder and the federation. Its focus included the objectives of education as well as the content and methods of education.

While the federal government has the responsibility to represent Germany in international forums and its federal Ministry of Education and Research represents education, Länder representatives are involved where relevant.

Council Secretariat

Both the KMK and BLK have permanent Secretariats based in Bonn. Each has a Secretary-General whose role is head of the support agency, not spokesperson for the organization. It is, however, a high-profile position with media attention given to the Secretary-General's statements.

AUSTRALIA

Constitutional authority

Education is constitutionally the responsibility of the states in Australia, but the federal government has assumed a growing role, though one that varies across the three broad levels of the education system: schooling, vocational education and training, and higher education.

Practical authority

School education

There is general agreement between the jurisdictions that school-level education is primarily the responsibility of the states and territories (for brevity, referred to in the following as “states”) with their education Ministers responsible for ensuring the adequacy of all schools, including non-government schools, in which about 30 per cent of students are enrolled. State governments provide some financial support for the growing number of non-government schools, but the federal government provides considerable financial support, both capital and recurrent funding to supplement their income from fees.

At various times, the federal government has also used its capacity to provide specific-purpose grants to state governments to support specific education activities in government schools.

Vocational education and training

Traditionally, technical education has been the responsibility of the states. This resulted in a mix of technical high schools, technical streams within ordinary high schools, and working men’s colleges, which often became institutes of technology. Recent developments have generally replaced “technical” with “vocational.”

Developments, led largely by the federal government, have blurred the responsibility for vocational education. The government sector is primarily a state responsibility but receives increasing federal funds. A growing non-government sector receives considerable federal financial support and encouragement. A pivotal decision by state and federal Ministers was the establishment of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) to oversee development of an Australian Qualification Training Framework. State training authorities must report annually to ANTA on their achievement of performance goals.

Higher education

Higher education is also the constitutional responsibility of the states. Virtually all universities are government institutions established through state legislation. The federal government contributed a share of funding from the mid-1950s, but took over full funding from the mid-1970s, making university education effectively a federal responsibility. The reach was extended during the 1980s as state teachers’ colleges, institutes of technology, and colleges of advanced education were converted to or amalgamated with universities, bringing them under the control of the federal government. The federal government abolished higher-education fees in the 1970s, after taking over full funding, and then reintroduced them in the late 1980s, in the form of a post-graduation tax liability. The federal government also introduced the provision for institutions to create places for full-fee international students, now about 20 per cent of total.

The federal government exercises control, through funding, over courses and enrollment quotas, and most recently, is attempting to deregulate the charges for university places and to influence the institutions’ workplace employment arrangements. These proposed changes will be determined by the federal parliamentary Upper House.

Overlap enrollments

The distinction between the three sectors identified above is becoming increasingly blurred through increasing provision of vocational education in schools (as early as Grade 8) and opportunities for

students to enrol simultaneously in a mix of courses from school, vocational education, and the first year of higher education. The federal role in vocational and higher education is extended further into schools through these arrangements.

Collaboration among jurisdictions

The first high-profile collaboration that went beyond information sharing involved the development of common and agreed national goals for schooling in the 1980s. This was followed by the development of national curriculum frameworks for broad curriculum areas. National policies on the education of girls, indigenous students, adult education, the quality of teaching and learning in Australian universities, and a national qualifications framework have all been developed collaboratively. All jurisdictions work together on copyright issues at all levels of education.

For a much longer period, all Australian jurisdictions and the Australian Bureau of Statistics have collaborated on an annual census of schools, students, staff, and educational expenditure. Since 1989, they have produced an *Annual National Report on Schooling*, to report on success in meeting the goals for schooling.

Some collaborative work involves only the states. Recent examples include: the development of common scales on which state-based measures of achievement in literacy and numeracy can be expressed in the absence of nationwide common tests; and the development of a common selection score for further and higher education.

Ministerial Councils

There is a Council of Ministers of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) of which the state and federal Ministers are all members. The Chair rotates whereas, in most such bodies in Australia, it is always taken by the federal Minister. Sub-groups sometimes meet, for example those concerned with schools, higher education, or youth. Their resolutions are then endorsed by the next full MCEETYA meeting. There is a separate Council of Ministers responsible for vocational education and training, which, because of its connection with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), is referred to as ANTA MINCO. This Council is always chaired by the federal Minister.

These Councils play a major role in coordinating the collaboration between the states and the federal government. For some of their work, they have created jointly-owned organizations. MCEETYA has, for example, created the Curriculum Corporation through which a substantial amount of curriculum development work is done, some of it led by individual jurisdictions. The Corporation is funded by all governments on an agreed formula. The Australian National Training Authority was established under federal legislation and is funded by the federal government, but reports to ANTA MINCO.

The Councils generally work by consensus with resolutions being influential, but not binding on jurisdictions. Issues seldom reach a vote, but where they do, there is a provision for dissent to be recorded. In ANTA MINCO, each state has one vote, while the federal government has two votes and a casting vote. On the controversial issue of resourcing for government schools, there was a MCEETYA task force that, for a time, excluded federal representation.

Meetings of Chief Executives

The Chief Executives of the Education Ministries, equivalent of Canadian Deputy Ministers, also meet as the Australian Education Systems Chief Officials Committee (AESOC). An earlier version of this body excluded the federal Ministry, but all now participate. The group has a variety of subordinate task forces/committees, which are typically chaired by a CEO. Membership of the subordinate groups sometimes includes representatives of teacher and parent associations, trade unions, business council personnel, and other specialist groups.

Council Secretariat

The Council of Ministers of Education has its own Secretariat, unlike most other such Councils for which a Secretariat is provided by the federal government. In addition, and importantly for the states, the Secretariat is not located in Canberra, the national capital, but in Melbourne, one of the state capitals. The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary and has only five to six staff. The Secretary does not speak or negotiate on behalf of the Council. Statements are made by Ministers, with the media attending more to statements by the federal Minister, except in the home environments of the state Ministers. Work that might be done by a larger Secretariat is undertaken by the Curriculum Corporation, as a company that the Ministers collectively own.

As a neutral agency, the Secretariat serves the Ministerial members and their designated representatives, establishing the agenda, commissioning, collecting, collating, summarizing position papers presented by Ministers, identifying key issues, and ensuring that recommendations are presented for discussion and resolution in an appropriate form.

United States of America

Constitutional authority

Responsibility for education is reserved to the states in the U.S. under the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. States determine what authority is exercised at the state level and what is given to local communities. The U.S. position is thus very similar to that in Canada.

Practical authority

While the federal government has no formal constitutional role in education, it exerts considerable influence. It provides less than 10 per cent of the funding for schools, but while this funding appears to be marginal, it can exert considerable leverage on the system.

None of the federal intervention involves direct control over the states or local education authorities within states. Control is exercised through conditional funding, which is available only if recipients satisfy requirements necessary to receive the funding. The nature of the control is typically limited through legislative restriction that precludes control over curriculum, achievement standards and assessments, or program of instruction.

Federal involvement in education began with vocational education at the beginning of the 20th Century. A further major involvement came with the GI Bill of Rights, under which returned military personnel were given new educational opportunities after World War II. Engagement with primary and secondary education came with attempts in the 1960s to improve quality and equity in schooling. In the next decade, concerns about equity led to legislation requiring schools to serve students with disabilities in the least restrictive environments. In each case, the federal government acted to serve what it saw to be a national interest not otherwise met by the states.

Collaboration among jurisdictions

The U.S. is a large and diverse system. Within the fifty states, a very large number of school districts develop and manage much of the educational policy. Within this context, a national perspective is difficult to establish, and in many respects not desired.

In the 1960s, the early superiority of the Soviet Union in space exploration created a sense of deficiency that spurred efforts to work in a more coordinated and even national fashion. The U.S. developed a range of federally funded curriculum initiatives and an elevation in the status and scope of the federal education bureaucracy. In response to the increased federal role, the states developed a new initiative for collaborative work, with the establishment of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) in 1965.

The collaborative work through ECS and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is essentially information sharing on current federal initiatives and issues that have become important on the national scene in their own right. Recent publications of CCSSO are illustrative. Publications include: the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* and its implementation; state curriculum content standards; state accountability and indicator reports; and specific programs, such as school-based programs for teen-pregnancy prevention.

Federal initiatives operate in a number of ways. Some sharpen debate and build pressures for states and school districts to take responsibility for reform. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) produces data on progress in levels of achievement of students. The public release of these data became a stimulus for debate and action within states. The federal government's 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, drew on international comparisons up to the early 1980s to highlight the relatively poor standing of U.S. education internationally. More recently, the federal government has used the international comparisons provided by the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Third International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) in similar ways, though in a less contentious fashion than that adopted by the authors of *A Nation at Risk*.

Many federal initiatives involve support for specific policies or actions. The federal government respects the constitutional authority of the states and the historic roles of independent school districts and schools by not mandating adoption of federal initiatives, but they are nonetheless powerful because they tie access to funds to compliance. The most recent example, the *No Child Left Behind Act*, obliges states to have clear achievement goals for sub-populations as well as the whole population, and assessment programs for determining the extent to which the goals are being achieved at school and state level. The legislative restriction that precludes federal control over achievement standards and assessments is retained through freedom for states to develop their own, but is adjusted through an obligation to render the results comparable across states by scaling against the NAEP test.

Some federal initiatives stimulate collaboration among states. For example, northwestern states are using federal funds for a pilot program in which they are training state and local staff in the use an analytical process for program improvement in adult education.

Ministerial Councils

There is no direct equivalent in the U.S. of the councils of provincial Ministers in Canada, Germany, and Australia. There are, however, two broad-based organizations through which the states seek cooperation on things that they could more easily achieve together. They are both membership organizations, with no official powers or roles other than those conferred on them by their members.

One is the Education Commission of the States (ECS), which was created as an interstate compact in 1965. Its strategy, reflected in its work program and publications, is to improve public education by facilitating the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences among state policy makers and education leaders. The member states (49 of the 50), territories, and the District of Columbia are each represented by seven commissioners: the governor and six other individuals who typically include the chief state school officer, legislators, education officials, and business leaders. The Chair is held by a Governor and the Vice-Chair by a state legislator, with both posts alternating between the two major political parties. Each Chair selects a particular issue to serve as a focal point for the organization's work during his or her term.

The other is the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) that brings together the public officials who lead the state and territory departments responsible for primary and secondary education. The Council elects a President and a Board of Directors from among its members.

ECS and CCSSO cooperate on various particular activities where their current interests converge.

Meetings of Chief Executives

ECS is a body that contains both elected officials and chief executives. CCSSO is a body of chief executives. There is no pair of bodies in the U.S. with a relationship equivalent to that between CMEC and ACDME in Canada, or MCEETYA and CESCEO in Australia.

Council Secretariat

ECS has a substantial Secretariat with more than 60 staff and a considerable communication program operating through both print and electronic media. While the Commission is headed by a Chair and Vice-Chair, the Secretariat is headed by a President, selected as a distinguished educationist in his or her own right. The President has a high media profile, and speaks on behalf of ECS. Given the nature of the ECS's role, however, this does not mean speaking on behalf of the member states and territories.

CCSSO also has a substantial Secretariat with more than 80 staff conducting a wide range of programs and a considerable communication program in both print and electronic form. While the Council is led by its Board of Directors, the Secretariat is led by an Executive Director.

European Union

Constitutional authority

The European Union (EU) is a *sui generis* legal-political entity in which sovereign states pool certain aspects of their sovereignty by Treaty, but in which the structures of the Union do not have recognized federal status. In that sense, the EU provides a potential model for CMEC only by analogy.

In the field of education, constitutional responsibility rests fully with the member states. The Union is expected to encourage cooperation between member states, and if necessary, support and supplement their action, while fully respecting their responsibility for the content of teaching, the organization of education systems, and their cultural and linguistic diversity. In the area of vocational education, however, the Union has somewhat more authority to enable it to improve vocational education and training that would facilitate: adaptation to industrial change; integration of individuals into the labour market; and cooperation between educational and training establishments and firms.

Practical authority

The Union has no direct responsibility for any aspect of the education system, and the principle of “subsidiarity,” under which responsibility rests with the member states, is reinforced by the explicit exclusion of any action to harmonize the laws and regulations of the member states.

The EU heads of state altered this position in a significant way in a meeting in Lisbon in 2000. They established the goal for the EU of becoming “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.” They adopted the “open method of coordination” as the means to facilitate the convergence of national policies and the attainment of certain objectives shared by the member states in domains where the legal powers of the Union are limited. This method requires joint definition of objectives and yardsticks (i.e., statistics, indicators) with which to determine progress, as well as cooperation on innovation in education. The heads of state gave the education Ministers a specific remit to implement these decisions in the field of education.

Collaboration among jurisdictions

With their formal position of ongoing authority for national education secured by the safeguards provided by the Treaty, the member states have, in fact, proved quite willing to cooperate through the

institutional framework of the Union, particularly by way of non-binding decisions. More formal, binding decisions are used only where it is necessary to provide an adequate basis for operational programs. These decisions involve providing financial support to activities such as student exchanges or curriculum development, in which individuals or educational institutions are the beneficiaries.

The capacity of the Union to finance cooperative activities provides an important stimulus for cooperation beyond the desire of member states to work together for mutual benefit.

With the impetus of the “Lisbon strategy” introduced in 2000, the EU developed a coherent, overall approach to national education policies for the first time in the context of the Union. The education Ministers adopted three major goals: improving quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems; ensuring their accessibility; and opening up education and training to the wider world. Beneath these, the Ministers adopted 13 specific objectives, covering the various types and levels of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) to make lifelong learning a reality.

On the basis on an interim evaluation of progress, the European Commission (EC) called for accelerated reforms and a stronger political commitment to the Lisbon goal. On this basis, cooperative work can be expected to increase, with the hand of the EU bodies and the EC Executive staff in education potentially strengthened.

Ministerial Councils

The EU Council of Education Ministers meets either formally or informally up to four times a year.

Meetings of Chief Executives

The EU Education Committee, in which the member states are represented by officials, supports the Council of Education Ministers. The Education Committee conducts the preliminary examination and negotiation of texts to be adopted by Ministers.

The presidency of the Education Committee rotates among members on a six-monthly basis, in line with the rotation of the Presidency of the EU. Presidencies have some influence on the work agenda by raising topics of current concern that may lead to the adoption of an agreed non-binding text. In recent years, however, this has led to dispersal of effort.

Council Secretariat

A Secretariat for education and culture supports the frequent meetings of the Council of Education Ministers, the Education Committee, and the rotating Presidency. The Executive (‘Secretariat’) staff of around 600, of whom about half work on education, exercise considerable influence on the education program. The Executive plays only a facilitating role, but manages the cooperative effort among countries and the implementation of the operational programs.

The Director-General for Education and Culture and other staff in the Directorate-General do not speak for member states, but they do speak publicly on issues of concern in member countries and on the programs that are being implemented cooperatively.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Constitutional authority

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) offers some parallels for CMEC, though it works in a very different constitutional environment. Its members are 30 independent countries and they cede no power to a central authority. There is no equivalent of a federation.

Practical authority

The OECD produces internationally agreed instruments, decisions, and recommendations in a context where consensus is required. It has no power to mandate. It influences developments through its analytic work and the process of dialogue, peer review, and pressure, in which member countries engage cooperatively.

Collaboration among jurisdictions

OECD member countries collaborate in a wide range of policy domains. In education, policy options have been developed for the whole range of lifelong learning – early childhood education and care, the transition from initial education to working life, tertiary education, and adult learning. Longer-term policy work on “education futures” is being undertaken to sharpen the discussion of current policy options as well as support long-term planning.

In addition to the qualitative policy work, international quantitative comparisons of education systems are provided. The most recent extension of that quantitative work has been to direct assessment of learning outcomes among 15-year-olds through the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The shape of PISA, as of all other work, was determined cooperatively by participating countries.

OECD’s work on education currently operates under five distinct education programs, each with its own mandate, sources of funds, and governance. In three of the five, all 30 member countries are involved and in the other two, two-thirds of the member countries are involved.

This division into five separate programs offers the advantage of focusing on the mandate of each program, but can jeopardize the capacity to address in an overall and integrated fashion, the education policy issues that member countries face. To strengthen the overall focus of the work and to make it more strategic, a meeting of education system chief executive officers (CEOs) was convened in early 2003. This brought together the most senior education officials in member countries for the first time.

In preparation for that meeting, the CEOs were invited to nominate key policy issues they expected to be addressing in the coming three to five years. A draft agenda was fashioned from their advice and submitted to them for review. With some adjustment, it was then used to structure the meeting around major policy themes. An individual CEO was invited to introduce the discussion under each theme, not by providing information on developments at home, but by reflecting on the dilemmas to be dealt with, or to put it another way, the issues to be worried about. That stimulated sharing of insights and ideas, but at an entirely different level from that achieved when the information shared is about domestic developments and actions.

Subsequently, the governing bodies of the five separate programs have collectively adopted a framework of six strategic objectives arising from the CEOs discussions. Their programs were then reorganized under these objectives. In the process, they have also sought to ensure that synergies among their separate programs are maximized to strengthen the overall focus on the strategic directions. They have also agreed to use this strategic framework for at least four years.

The impact of this work on policy development in member countries will depend on the quality of the work and the ability to communicate its relevance. There is no authority to mandate, only the opportunity to persuade.

Ministerial Councils

Meetings of OECD Education Ministers have been held every five years to provide a mandate for further work and determine its main directions. These meetings also provide an opportunity for Ministers to discuss pressing policy issues, and gain insight from international exchange and international, comparative policy analysis.

Meetings of Chief Executives

OECD regularly convenes national officials for meetings of the governing bodies of its programs. It also manages programs guided by the five-year mandates provided by Ministers. Representation in these meetings is typically below the level of CEO.

The first meeting of the Education CEOs in 2003 led to a powerful, strategic perspective on the work agenda.

Council Secretariat

OECD has a substantial Secretariat of more than 2,000 staff, based in Paris. The Directorate for Education has around 80 staff, about half are policy analysts. The Director for Education and other staff in the Directorate do not speak for member countries, but they speak publicly on issues of concern in member countries and offer comparative comment on the performances of countries.