**NINTH REGULAR MEETING OF THE** OEA/Ser.W/XIII.6.9

**INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION** CIDI/CIE/doc.17/21

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VIRTUAL

FINAL REPORT OF THE NINTH REGULAR MEETING
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (CIE)

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“Towards the construction of a new Hemispheric Education Compact in a context of change”

 The ninth regular meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE) was held virtually on November 18 and 19, 2021. It consisted of an inaugural session and six plenary sessions, which were chaired by the Honorable Daryll Matthew, Minister of Education, Sports, and the Creative Arts of Antigua and Barbuda in his capacity as CIE Chair. It was attended by delegations from 28 member states.

Audio recordings of the meeting may be found at the following links:

 November 18, morning session:

<http://scm.oas.org/audios/2021/CIE_Reunion%20Ordinaria_AM_11-18-2021.mp3>

November 18, afternoon session:

<http://scm.oas.org/audios/2021/CIE_Reunion%20Ordinaria_PM_11-18-2021.mp3>

November 19:

<http://scm.oas.org/audios/2021/DCMM/CIDI-CIE-11-19-2021.zip>

1. Inaugural session

 The meeting began with an inaugural session at which the Executive Secretary for Integral Development, Ms. Kim Osborne, offered some opening remarks. Secretary Osborne’s speech may be found in document [CIDI/CIE/INF.2/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/INF&classNum=2&lang=t).

 The inaugural session also heard opening remarks by the Honorable Daryll Matthew, in which he highlighted the Inter-American Education Agenda (IEA) as a policy dialogue opportunity for defining priority areas of action to guide inter-American cooperation in education over the next five years (document [CIDI/RME/RES.  1/15 rev.  1](https://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=V.11.1%20CIDI/RME/RES.&classNum=1&lang=e)). He also emphasized how the Plan of Action of Antigua and Barbuda and its principles have strengthened linkages between the IEA and the goals of the 2030 Agenda, especially Sustainable Development Goal No. 4.

 Minister Matthew called for action to expand the collaborative work done so far in order to optimize countries’ capacities to generate opportunities and ensure the continuity of education for all within the framework of the Hemispheric Action Plan for the Continuity of Education (PHACE).

1. First plenary session

 Minister Matthew invited the delegations to adopt the meeting’s draft agenda, document [CIDI/CIE/doc.2/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=2&lang=e), and the draft schedule, document [CIDI/CIE/doc.3/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=3&lang=e). Both were approved without objections.

 Then, in accordance with Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure of the Inter-American Committees of CIDI, Minister Matthew gave the floor to Jesús Schucry Giacoman Zapata, Director of the Department of Human Development, Education, and Employment (DHEE), which serves as the CIE’s Technical Secretariat, for him to present a progress report on the implementation of the mandates of the Tenth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education. The presentation and the Technical Secretariat’s report may be found in documents [CIDI/CIE/INF.3/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/INF&classNum=3&lang=t) and [CIDI/CIE/doc.16/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=16&lang=e), respectively.

 The CIE took note of the report and, there being no objections or comments, Minister Matthew adjourned the session.

1. Second plenary session: Educational continuity in the COVID-19 context: the role of ICTs and connectivity as essential elements for guaranteeing the right to education, with special attention to vulnerable populations in developing countries

 The discussion on the meeting’s theme was led by Minister Matthew. He reminded the meeting that the adoption of the IEA, followed by the Plan of Action of Antigua and Barbuda in 2019, had encouraged discussion and cooperation among the ministers in priority areas, one of the cross-cutting themes of which was the use of information and communication technologies in education.

 Minister Matthew then noted that the right to education no longer refers solely to access to a physical location, the presence of a teacher, and material resources; instead, education in the 21st century is increasingly based on access to the internet, and governments are therefore obliged to ensure that student populations enjoy that access.

 He explained that challenges exist both at the macro level, with students in developed countries having better access to the internet and technological devices than their peers in developing countries, and at the micro level, with observable gaps between students who attend public schools compared to those attending private schools.

 He emphasized that minority groups have been particularly affected in lower income countries, and that the differences between rich and poor countries have become abysmal as governments face complex choices, one of which is to make 21st century education accessible to all, which can only be achieved by providing equitable access to ICTs.

 Following his presentation, Minister Matthew invited the delegations to share their experiences and ideas relating to the theme.

 The delegation of Argentina requested that a forum for debate and discussion be established or that a working committee be formed in the coming months to examine potential interruptions of full onsite attendance, in order to facilitate exchanges and shared protocols for facing the challenges ahead. Argentina emphasized its wish to coordinate with the other member states at the meeting on methods and protocols for action, in light of the fact that universal access to connectivity has not been achieved.

 Colombia requested that in the future, the CIE raise a series of issues at dialogue forums, so they could be addressed and joint strategies be devised. The delegation proposed that one of the issues to be addressed should be encouraging the use of technology in the classroom and reinforcing work with teachers so that they not only have the technology, but also know how to make good use of it as a learning tool.

 The delegation of the United States remarked that its Department of Education had launched a roadmap for the return to schools, and that it would be willing to share it with the CIE Technical Secretariat when information is collected on practices and measures implemented throughout the Hemisphere.

 Finally, the CIE Chair noted that the delegations’ contributions had effectively highlighted the key points of the theme, and that it was interesting to note the diversity of strategies implemented to ensure that the basic right of education was guaranteed by governments. With this, Minister Matthew adjourned the second session.

1. Third plenary session: Contributions for the construction of the second phase of the Inter-American Education Agenda (2022–2027) and methodology for its definition.

Building a hemispheric proposal on local experiences: Presentation of the conclusions, lessons learned, and proposals for action arising from the public policy dialogues and activities held during 2020 and 2021

 This session was attended by officials from the ministries of education, who spoke about the lessons learned, conclusions, and proposals for action deriving from the public policy dialogues and activities carried out in 2020 and 2021. It also allowed for a multisectoral approach to the topic, with the inclusion of contributions from the labor and health sectors, and discussed the methodology for the second phase of the IEA in 2022–2027.

* Toward a culture of digital accessibility: Educational experiences and challenges for people with disabilities in times of pandemic

 To begin the discussion, Minister Matthew turned the floor over to Viviana Esquivel Vega, an advisor to the Academic Vice Ministry of the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica.

 Ms. Esquivel reported that after the pandemic declaration, the strategy “I learn at home” was launched. This triggered specific responses from a sector of the education community, which underscored the challenge of generating educational strategies in response to the crisis that would allow the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

 Among the strategies to provide functional and relevant responses to the needs identified, Ms. Esquivel cited coordination with public universities, the National Council of Persons with Disabilities, and organized groups of persons with disabilities; training in digital skills for content design and the accessible use of digital tools; the production of accessible documents; coordination with focal points of the OAS permanent missions from countries such as Colombia and Argentina to create forums for dialogue and share ideas for working with teachers and students with disabilities and their families and to hear directly from those actors about their immediate remote education access needs, experiences, and challenges during the pandemic period. She also spoke of the opening of a community of practice on the CIE website for member states’ officials to share their experiences, ideas, and challenges, specifically in connection with the continuity of education for persons with disabilities during the pandemic.

 Ms. Esquivel said that the main lessons learned included that the design of digital educational resources and informational materials for education requires planning and integrating accessibility for all people from the outset; and that hybrid education schemes entail greater challenges in terms of the accessibility conditions required to reach the entire population (not only those with disabilities, but also indigenous people, migrants, and others).

 Reference document: [CIDI/CIE/doc.5/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=5&lang=e).

* Education with inclusion and equity

 Since the Vice Minister of Education of Ecuador was having technical problems, the meeting first heard the remarks of Ms. Claudia Marcelina Molina Rodríguez, Deputy Director of Skills Development at the Ministry of National Education of Colombia.

 Deputy Director Molina shared the highlights of the virtual dialogue and exchange of experiences on the theme of inclusion and equity in education held in July 2021, which had focused on essential aspects along three axes: regulations, tools to support inclusion and equity, and territorial experiences. She spoke of document [CIDI/CIE/doc.4/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=4&lang=e), which summarizes the contributions made on the online dialogue forum, and of the event’s executive summary (document [CIDI/CIE/doc.11/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=11&lang=e)), which identifies commonalities and differences among the member states, trends, findings, and next steps for inclusion and equity in education.

 Deputy Director Molina commented on her ministry’s plans to address the issue of peaceful coexistence at schools in future dialogues, as well its intention to share its experiences on the issue of healthy lifestyles and present the progress made with regulations and their implementation.

* Exchange and reflection on the return to face-to-face education phase

 Minister Matthew gave the floor to Cinthya Game, Vice Minister of Education of Ecuador, who reported on the exchange and reflections regarding the return to face-to-face education in order to encourage dialogue on successful experiences and challenges associated with strategies for the return to schools in the region’s countries. A summary of this dialogue may be found in document [CIDI/CIE/doc.6/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=6&lang=e).

 The Vice Minister described some of the measures taken by the Ministry of Education of Ecuador since 2020, including the development of the COVID-19 education plan and the implementation of phase 1, “Learning together at home,” which involved such actions as the activation of emotional and pedagogical support, the acceleration of digital literacy processes, the dissemination of contents through radio, television, and print using an open-access model, and the creation of a repository of educational resources.

 In turn, phase 2, “Learning and taking care of ourselves together,” entailed a voluntary and progressive return, with reduced capacity and safety measures. This phase aimed to ensure the continuity of education, permanence in school, and the return to the classroom. It included the development of guidelines and protocols, as well as strategies for diagnosing and leveling up students, all of which made it possible to achieve an alternating presence without community contagion at educational institutions. Finally, to promote joint responsibility between schools and civil society, the “Sponsor a school” strategy was launched, intended to combine forces to improve and strengthen the country’s schools.

Building a hemispheric proposal with a multisectoral approach: Contributions from employment and health

* Health sector

Minister Matthew gave the floor to Marcela Galeano Castillo, Coordinator of the Methods, Conditions, and Healthy Lifestyles group at the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Colombia and President of the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization for the 2020-2021 period.

Ms. Galeano reported that the Colombian Ministry of Health and Social Protection had been working on the “Healthy Cities, Environments, and Rural Areas” (CERS) strategy, which has enabled a coordinated approach with other sectors to impact health promotion; this strategy is a territorial planning tool that seeks to positively influence social determinants. The CERS strategy also aims to enshrine health promotion as the highest priority in the territorial policy agenda, as well as to facilitate meetings on crosscutting issues and resource management, generate agreements for joint action, and promote strategic alliances.

The strategy is currently operating in two phases—readiness and implementation—which recognize five main aspects that must be met by the entities that want to be a part of the strategy: demographic, economic, social, environmental, and financial considerations. Through all of this, dialogue with the local authorities has been promoted. At the national level, support is provided by the Ministry of National Education and the School Meals Administrative Unit.

After Ms. Galeano’s presentation, the delegation of Colombia, on behalf of its Ministry of Education, took the floor to indicate that, as a ministry of education, they had a commitment under the CIE Work Plan that they wish to reinforce with one of their initiatives related to a toolkit that was worked on together with UNICEF and that could be of interest to other member states.

* Labor sector

Minister Matthew gave the floor to Edith Beatriz Byk, National Director of Continuing Education at the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security of Argentina and Chair of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML).

In the framework of the dialogue between Ministers of Labor and Education and the 2021 Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the Director noted that the following topics had been proposed as areas for continued intersectoral collaboration:

* Continuous lifelong learning, and labor and productive reconversion.
* Trends and methodologies for the development of the skills of the future (both technical and socioemotional).
* Analyzing joint work and/or coordination experiences between ministries and with other public and private actors, in the identification and development of the skills of the future.
* The development of a Regional Qualifications Framework to strengthen competencies and the development of the skills of the future; this would continue the partnership work between the OAS, ILO/CINTEFOR, and UNESCO referred to above.
* The management and generation of information that portrays different national education and work realities and is relevant to them.
* Strengthening, updating, and expanding skill certification systems and employment services.
* Strengthening institutionalized social dialogue to build more just, equitable, and resilient societies.
* The prevention and eradication of child labor.
* The establishment of training and transition paths between productive sectors.

 Following Director Byk’s remarks, Director Giacoman asked the special guests from the Organization’s allies attending the meeting to take note of these requests to offer very concrete products and activities in response to the requests made by the ministries of health, labor, and education.

 Minister Matthew closed the session by restating the importance of intersectoral work. Presentations are in document [CIDI/CIE/INF.4/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/INF&classNum=4&lang=t).

* Methodology for constructing the second phase of the IEA (2022–2027)

 Document [CIDI/CIE/doc.9/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=9&lang=e) describes the different stages for the collective construction of the second phase of the IEA. It also summarizes which of those stages have been completed and proposes the next three stages to confirm the priorities, components, and emerging needs that will be considered in the second phase of the IEA, as well as the actions needed to ensure educational continuity over the next five years.

In the absence of any comments or objections, Minister Matthew placed before the member states the draft resolution “Methodology for the Construction of the Second Phase of the Inter-American Education Agenda,” document [CIDI/CIE/doc.10/21](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=XIII.6.9%20CIDI/CIE/doc&classNum=10&lang=e), to adopt the methodology described in document CIDI/CIE/doc.9/21.

The delegation of Costa Rica requested that Director Giacoman provide the delegations present at the meeting with a summary of the proposed methodology and the ongoing process.

Director Giacoman made a presentation on the document in question, after which the delegation of Argentina took the floor. The delegation said that the way it has been implemented had been valuable and fruitful; it also spoke of the forums and venues for dialogue that the CIE had made available to the countries, and urged them to be vigilant in updating their lists of officials so that the forums remain active. Argentina also referred to the wealth of ideas contained in the summary documents and suggested that some of them could become hemispheric projects or launched as pilot projects. The country also suggested activating the OAS’s relationships with its strategic partners, with other areas of the Organization, or with observer countries to generate synergies that would allow those issues to be given priority for transformation into projects with a hemispheric reach.

The delegation of Colombia affirmed its support for the meetings to be convened in 2022, including the preparatory meeting for the ministerial meeting, and it expressed the hope that the construction of the IEA’s second phase would continue in a spirit of collaboration and joint construction.

The delegation of Mexico expressed its support for the proposed methodology and said that defining the themes and priority areas of action for the following years was a matter of the utmost importance. Mexico also agreed that the venues for dialogue were one of the main axes of the methodology.

Following these comments and there being no objections, document CIDI/CIE/doc.10/21 was adopted.

1. **Fourth plenary session: Election of CIE authorities for the 2021-2024 period**

Minister Matthew proposed the election of Jaime Perczyk, Minister of Education of Argentina, as Chair of the ICE and María Brown Pérez, Minister of Education of Ecuador, as First Vice Chair, and that their elections be by acclamation. There being no objections, the proposal was approved.

Remarks by the Minister of Education of Argentina, Jaime Perczyk, Chair-elect of the CIE

The Chair-elect began his speech by expressing his commitment to working collaboratively with all the countries, seeking agreements and consensus, and bringing together experiences and lessons learned from each one to reassert, systematize, and share them and make them available to all. Beyond the challenges generated by the pandemic, he said it was important to recover what has been done in the region and that the task facing his ministry was to work for the region’s education in the post-pandemic period, as well as to build the education of the future.

One major task, he said, was building a model for combined education; progress was also needed with secondary education processes and teacher training, with the recognition of qualifications, and with room for mobility. To that, he added the need to incorporate environmental education issues into compulsory education, and to build, design, implement, and finance common venues for research in teacher education so that knowledge could be produced jointly.

Minister Perczyk also underscored the importance of embracing the topics of distance learning and job training, in collaboration with other international organizations, to ensure the optimal insertion of young people into the labor market.

He closed his speech by emphasizing that the focus of his term in office will be joint and collaborative work on the topics identified and on any others that may arise from the active participation of the member states, with the idea that the region can systematize, produce, and present learnings, and learn from others, but also teach and show that a great effort has been made by the entire education community and the states. He also stated that he will try to continue the work carried out by Antigua and Barbuda during its time as Chair, and to ensure that the mechanisms of integration and solidarity continue to function on a permanent basis.

Remarks by the Minister of Education of Ecuador, María Brown Pérez, First Vice Chair-elect of the CIE

Minister Brown said that education’s new direction must address regional challenges in a context of change characterized by significant gaps in all spheres of social life and the inevitable lags caused by the pandemic, but a context that also has many lessons learned and the certainty of how important it is to share those learnings, strengthen multilateralism, and understand the strengths and weaknesses of education systems for the collective construction of knowledge.

She urged the countries to translate the agreements reached into concrete actions with an impact on the region, and to take advantage of the opportunity of working together to build an agenda that contributes to reducing educational and social gaps.

The minister reaffirmed her country’s commitment to discuss and promote actions within the framework of the IEA as a key instrument for building more resilient education systems that guarantee the right to education. In that regard, she said that the work plan was focused on promoting venues for discussion and support on issues such as the reactivation of the post-pandemic education sector, the safe return to face-to-face classes, the recovery of learning, innovation and the digital education agenda, and educational inclusion for children and adolescents in situations of human mobility.

She also supported the words of the minister from Argentina in stating that there are essential axes that must guide the IEA: post-pandemic educational recovery and repair; student mobility and the recognition of studies among the different countries of the region; the inclusion of concrete actions in education to mitigate climate change; interconnected professional development and teacher training in the region’s countries; use of new technologies in education; the relationship between education, employment, and national development; and, finally, the assessment of and research into educational practices.

To conclude the fourth plenary session, Minister Matthew urged the member states to consider submitting their candidacies for the position of Second Vice Chair of the CIE, and he proposed that they be presented during the meetings of CIDI for them to be included on the agenda of the 2022 Meeting of Ministers of Education. There being no objections, it was so decided.

1. **Fifth plenary session: Reception of formal offers to host the Eleventh Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education**

Agreement on the theme(s) of the Eleventh Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education: “Towards the construction of a new hemispheric educational pact in a context of change”

Minister Matthew put forward for the delegations’ consideration the proposed theme for the 2022 ministerial. There being no objections, the theme was approved.

The meeting then proceeded to receive offers to host the Eleventh Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education, with Argentina announcing its offer to host the meeting in May 2022. There being no objections, the generous offer of the Argentine delegation was accepted.

1. **Sixth plenary session: Other business**

There was no further business to discuss at the meeting.

1. **Agreements adopted and next steps**

The meeting adopted resolution CIDI/CIE/RES. 1/21, “Methodology for the Construction of the Second Phase of the Inter-American Education Agenda.”