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*Minister of Higher Education
The Hon. Dzingai B. Mutumbuka, M.P.*

**Policies for Higher
Education in Zimbabwe:**

**A Response to the
World Bank Report**

The Human Resources Research Centre (HRRC), which, is based in the University of Zimbabwe's Faculty of Education, opened in January 1988. The HRRC's decision to initiate an Occasional Paper series was based on the realization that there is a dearth of published research and policy-related material, focusing on the special needs of sub-Saharan Africa and limited publication outlets for African scholars.

Papers in this series are intended to disseminate research findings and to stimulate policy dialogue. The series includes works which, in the opinion of the HRRC Editorial Board, contribute significantly to the state of knowledge about human resources issues and warrant wide distribution. Occasional papers are widely circulated in Zimbabwe and internationally. Items in the series are selected by the Editorial Board. The contents of individual papers do not necessarily reflect the positions or opinions of either the University or the HRRC.

We are honoured and pleased to have an insightful interview with Dr Dzingai B Mutumbuka, Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher Education, as the second paper in this series. This paper provides a comprehensive response to recently published World Bank recommendations for the region's education sector. This occasional paper represents the full text of an interview which Cde Mutumbuka granted in late 1987; portions of the interview have been reprinted in the first issue of the Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research (Vol I, no 1, March 1989).

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Victor Levine
HRRC Coordinator
March 1989

POLICIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE:

A Response to the World Bank Study

Dzingai B. Mutumbuka
Minister of Higher Education
Zimbabwe

ZJER: Comrade Minister, where appropriate, we would appreciate your answering questions first from the perspective of the region (sub-Saharan Africa) in your role as a leading authority, then from the perspective of Zimbabwe.

What are your general reactions to the WB Report?

MUTUMBUKA: The latest report is a much better product than the original one. I have been involved with this thing for more than a year. I first went for a meeting in March 1985 at Wye Plantation in Maryland to discuss the original draft. In attendance was an official from Ghana, another from Senegal and three officials involved in economic planning from Mauritius, Botswana and Madagascar. I then suggested that it was not fair to ask six Africans to speak on behalf of the rest of the continent and as a result a process was started which eventually led to the refinement of the document as originally produced by the World Bank. There have been, I think, between three and five drafts ... but there was a major draft produced after the meeting attended by ministers from Anglophone Africa and Nazareth Ethiopia and one attended by ministers of education from Francophone Africa in the Ivory Coast in January 1986. So the product is much better. It is impossible to write a

treatise on the problems of education in Africa south of the Sahara, bearing in mind the diversity of the countries involved, the different cultures and the different economic levels of development – especially for so huge a continent and for so complex a problem as education. So really it is an attempt at generalizations, but generalizations which on almost any page can be found not to have universal applications for the problems of Africa. So one must hasten to say that except for those foregoing remarks, the product is very much better than the original stuff and some of us are happy that we participated and tried to change some of the thinking within the World Bank. Having said that, one must perhaps give credit to the World Bank people, the drafters, particularly Peter Mook and others for agreeing to have their policy document debated. I think it is the first time that a multinational agency has actually said, "Look, that is what we think: what are your views? You are the practitioners in the field." So I think one must give them credit for that, as in the past they used to just make prescriptions. At least this time they have asked us what we think, and we have changed a number of issues that we thought did not have the stamp of approval of African ministers of education.

ZJER: Could you describe for us your role as an advisor on this project? What other African authorities were involved? Do you feel that the report reflects your advice?

MUTUMBUKA: I can't really call myself an advisor to the World Bank. It is true that the people who are in the Bank are the people who are on the stage. They have regularly consulted me, regularly asked me to attend the meetings that they organised. I think up to a point it is a recognition of some of the efforts that Zimbabwe has made in restructuring the education system. And so I am glad that I have participated in this. Personally I have learnt a lot about the do's and don't's. I have also learnt a lot about the problems of education in Africa in general ... but also perhaps the problems of educational development worldwide.

ZJER: What are your feelings about such a project being undertaken by an international body based in the United States? Could this project have been undertaken by African scholars who have a better understanding of local conditions?

MUTUMBUKA: That is our own view and I have repeated this and in fact in Nazareth I was very critical: I said, Who are you people to get a bunch of American scholars, admittedly very bright, to write a prescription for the fate of education in Africa? I think that is the general criticism. But I even said that some of these people interested in the problem of Africa are not themselves perhaps to blame. It's rather a structural problem. The World Bank should certainly have involved some Africans. I think that the people who are involved are men and women of good will, they have good intentions for the development of education in Africa, but what could they do? They were asked to do this job and a lot of them actually work for the World Bank. My own view really is that when we discuss problems of African development – whether it is in education, agriculture, communication, industrialization etc. – there are a lot of major problems which affect the African continent that could be tackled better if Africans were used even if you wanted to use outside experts because of their vast experience. Certainly the African, the centre-piece of this development, must actually take an active part and I would say that at least half if not more than half of the people should be natives of the continent.

THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA

ZJER: The Report makes some fairly strong and negative statements about the state of education in Africa. Do you tend to agree with these, in general? Are things as desperate as the Report suggests?

The main educational issues in Africa today are stagnation of enrollments and the erosion of quality. (page 2)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, without being unfair, if you are sitting here in the SADCC region in the case of Zimbabwe and the case of Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, up to a point Malawi, you get the impression that the World Bank is damning African education. But the truth of the matter is, if you look at other countries, if you look at Somalia, if you look at what has happened in Francophone African countries, you look at Niger, at Mali, there has been a crisis and definitely there has been not a stagnation but a decrease in enrolment figures. Why? Simply because of the economic misfortunes of the African continent. African economies are agricultural. There has been a devastating drought in the Sahel. There has been world recession which has affected Africa's primary commodity production. So if you look at a situation where there is economic stagnation, what are the first sectors that are going to suffer? It is the social sectors: it is your education, it is your health. So the truth of the matter is yes, there has been a reduction both in quantity and in quality right across the continent. Again there are cases where there are exceptions which one has to accept but the truth of the matter is, in broad general terms, there has been stagnation both in terms of enrolment and in terms of quality.

GENERALIZING ABOUT THE CONTINENT

ZJER: While the Report does have disclaimers about the dangers of overgeneralizing it does attempt to generalize about the 39 countries in its study. Given the diversity of the region, are such generalizations useful? Would it have been wiser to have a series of separate reports on sub-regional groupings?

Any discussion of policies and priorities for a region as vast and diverse as sub-Saharan Africa naturally runs the risks of overstating commonalities and understating differences (page xi)

MUTUMBUKA: Both cases are valid. I think it is true that it is necessary to have a policy paper on the question of education in Africa because there are broad issues that are similar which cannot be denied. But on the other hand one has got to ask this question: Having found that there are broad similarities, where do we go next? I think the people in the World Bank themselves accept that having done that study, having found out that there are similarities (but probably more diversities than similarities), what is the next step? I agree with your second point, mainly that there is a need now to go to the sub-regions, of course – the problems of SADCC for example, or the problems of the Sahel or for that matter Arab-speaking Africa ... Why was it left out, some of us ask the question. If you are talking about education in Africa, why do you leave out North Africa? They say, " Ha! well you see, we always consider it as a part of the Arab world." But is that really valid? That is nonsense because Sudan is part of the Arab world and Somalia is considered part of the Arab world and Mauritania considers itself as part of the Arab world ... even some boundary states like Chad etc. It is also a clinical issue: it's just a question of where did they want to put a cut off point. So I would say that definitely it would be more beneficial now as a next stage to go for an analysis of the regional problems involved. Indeed in the context of Southern Africa we are very close and in fact I think there is a big chance for SADCC to succeed because we tend to be close in terms of our political outlook: we do not have those terrible conflicts which are found in other regions.

Probably the next stage really should be to look at the specific regions and say, What are the similarities? What can be done? But of course sometimes, even in the regions where there are some similarities like in the Horn of Africa,

there are conflicts of political interests like in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Then perhaps it is not always easy, in those contexts, to actually have a regional grouping. I think the next stage would be to have regional workshops where we could focus on the issues per individual country, per individual region. But I personally would think, even more important, that we should focus on themes. For example, we can look at the question of literacy. Which is the best way of solving the question of literacy? Because there are many controversies about it. Universal education is certainly a strategy, but what happens to the people who are not in school? On the other hand, if a country does not have enough resources and you cannot implement universal education, what do you do with the large pool of people who have never entered a classroom? So you can take a thematic approach to the issue: you can look at education and employment, you can look at the question to vocationalize or not to vocationalize secondary education. You are now focusing down to the issues that matter and the issues that will push education to the next stage. So I tend to agree with you that, after the generalizations, where do we go next?

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

ZJER: A pervasive theme of the Report is the promotion of private schools and the increased privatization of finance. Zimbabwe has one of the largest private school sectors in Africa and the tertiary sector has grown phenomenally since Independence. What are your reactions to the WB recommendations in this area?

... it is clear that families and nongovernmental organizations bear a significant and growing portion of the financial burden of education in much of Africa. It has been estimated, for example, that private expenditure

accounted for 31 percent of total national spending on education between 1975 and 1980 in Zimbabwe (page 16)

MUTUMBUKA: They probably used Zimbabwe as an example of a country where private sector involvement in education has paid dividends. The basic problem really is that there is only so much in the basket and yet the family that you have to feed is very large. We are not back to the five loaves and two pieces of fish of yester-century, but we really have a problem because there is only so much in the basket and yet the multitude that we have to feed is so big. So one must talk in terms of trade offs. When one talks in terms of trade offs one must also say: Can the resource base be augmented? Can our basket be bigger? And the World Bank is saying that by actually asking for parental contributions, for community contributions, for other contributions from the private sector like in this country, where companies are building schools, mines have built schools, communities have built schools ... If honestly the resources that go into education in Zimbabwe all came from government the entire budget of government would be committed to education. What I read the World Bank to be saying (privatization is a dirty word) is: Let there be more community participation; let the private sector have a social conscience and help to promote the social services; let parents take an active part - after all it is their children who are being educated. That in fact is what they are trying to say. If they are saying that, I would say yes: I do not see how the problem, which is so complex, can be solved by government alone.

POPULATION GROWTH

ZJER: Another theme in the Report is the impact of Africa's rate of population growth on education. Would you care to comment on that?

The impressive gains recently won in African education are now seriously threatened by circumstances outside the sector, including Africa's explosive population growth.... Between 1970 and 1980, while the world's population was growing at an average annual rate of 1.9 percent, Africa's population grew at 2.9 percent, one and a half times the world's rate. (page 18)

MUTUMBUKA: That is a very controversial and difficult question. It is true nevertheless to say we simply cannot allow the population to expand without control. As a statement of fact one can say yes, it is true. But on the other hand this thing can become very controversial. For example, if you look at a country like Botswana, the problem of Botswana is not so much of population explosion - they have too few people to be able to develop. So you have a converse situation ... one has got to be very careful about what one says. On the other hand one cannot deny that when the gross capital formation or the growth rate or the GDP (or whatever parameter you choose to use to measure increase in wealth) is always at par or less than the population growth, then it is quite clear to anybody that that kind of nation cannot raise its people's quality of living. Education is one method of improving the people's quality of life, so in general one is trying to say that the question of population is important. But we also know that the more educated the people, the more they control the population. So you really do not know what comes before - the cart or the horse, the chicken or the egg etc. It is a very difficult situation, but I think what they are trying to say is that it is necessary to ensure that the productivity of a nation as a whole is not at par or does not lag behind its population growth.

EDUCATIONAL FINANCE

ZJER: Many of the Report's recommendations regarding allocation of funds from tertiary to primary are based on rate of return studies. Do you feel that this approach is a good basis for such policy decisions?

A recent survey of cost-benefit studies conducted in sixteen African countries suggests average social rates of return to investment in African education of the following magnitudes: primary 26 percent, secondary 17 percent, and tertiary 13 percent... If the costs of tertiary education were to be prorated and the value of the research and other outputs of the education were to be assessed broadly to include some that may accrue to society in general, rather than only to the individuals who receive the education, then the rate of return to tertiary education would certainly appear higher. (page 22)

MUTUMBUKA: Like so many things that people have to use to measure wealth, people say that rates of return are high at the primary level. But we also know that a primary school graduate cannot do much. We know in this country, for example, that it is not enough just to have seven years of primary education: we need to impart certain skills that will make the individual concerned more capable of coping with the problems of the modern world. So I believe that what they are attempting to say is that ... if you read the Report later on about the tertiary education problem in some countries, particularly Francophone Africa ... that the amount of money that is given to tertiary education sacrifices the portion of the cake that is sliced for primary education. In most Francophone countries the practice still exists where secondary school students get bursaries to go to boarding school. The practice certainly exists universally in Francophone countries where university students are actually paid for wholly by the state. In other words there is heavy subsidization. What

they are trying to say, in other words, is that if there was no wholesale subsidization of secondary and tertiary education there would be a bit of the slice of cake in the basket to cater for primary education which is neglected, and it makes sense. Let's give an example: in a country like Niger the enrolment figure is probably around 30 to 40 percent and yet there you are subsidizing at full cost a university student; where is the social justice? They are saying, in other words, you should take a bit of that money from tertiary education. But still at tertiary education level you actually say to the student, "Look, you are going to get a loan or you are going to pay part of your own expenses at university". Then you will have enough money to tackle all the problems of primary education – that is, the problem of the primary school children who are not attending school. That is the trade off they are talking about.

ZJER: Despite the Report's generally negative description of the state of education and funding prospects, the Report's first recommendation is that overall expenditure on education be increased. What is your response to that recommendation?

... most African countries should try to increase both public and private expenditures on education (page 27)

MUTUMBUKA: I believe this is very important: if you look at the United Nations special programme of economic recovery for Africa, they pay a lot of attention to this and next month there is a meeting taking place in Khartoum (two meetings in fact) of the officials under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and with the participation of UNESCO to see the role of human resources in the economic recovery of Africa. So education does play a very pervasive and important role in the development of any nation. What they are trying to say is that, "Okay, we have this problem, but really what should we do?" And again it comes down to a question of priorities. If there are not enough resources you must pick up the priorities that you think can pay you maximum dividends. I salute and I

support their suggestion that despite all the economic problems, it is important to pay particular attention to education.

ZJER: In general, Zimbabwe has received very favourable mention in the Report. For example, there is a feature on expansion since Independence. In fact, many of the Report's criticisms simply do not apply to Zimbabwe at all and, in many instances, Zimbabwe appears to have already implemented many of the Report's recommendations. Would you care to comment on this?

MUTUMBUKA: When I first read the Report – some of the issues such as centralization of authority, the question of university students having to pay for part of their education (whether by way of forward loaning or whatever methods involving funds and community participation) – the use of teachers double shifting methods, you name it – I felt that perhaps they were looking at what has happened in Zimbabwe as examples of ways of reducing costs. So in that sense, yes, I do accept that some of the measures we have taken in this country are very good and I am pleased that the World Bank has taken cognizance of that.

ZJER: Another major theme in the Report is that the quality of education has declined drastically during the past decade. Do you agree with this assessment? If so, what do you think that the major factors have been in this decline?

The cognitive achievement of African students is low by world standards, and the evidence points to a decline in recent years.... The general conclusion to be drawn from these studies is that the quality of education in Sub-Saharan Africa is well below world standards.
(page 33)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, I agree there has been a decline. Some of the major factors I have already referred to. First, if there is any economic decline, it is the social sectors that

suffer first. The second is that if you cannot remunerate your teachers properly you get third-rate teachers. That also leads to a lowering of the quality of education. Thirdly, you get overcrowding. That overcrowding has actually tended to lead to a lowering of the standard of education – but probably one of the most important and the one that is not always obvious is the back-up services. We simply have not been able to get enough library books, to get enough textbooks, to get all the educational and learning materials that young people and education require. If you do not have those things, quality cannot be maintained and in many respects it will deteriorate. So those are the major reasons why one would say quality has suffered. Large teacher/pupil ratios, teachers not properly trained, lack of foreign currency in order to bring imports from outside, lack of textbooks, twenty kids sharing one textbook ... that surely cannot lead to the raising of the quality of education.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON TEACHERS

ZJER: The Ministry of Higher Education has responsibility, I believe, for teacher preparation. One of the Report's suggestions is that student/teacher ratios can be increased substantially with no serious effect on student achievement, thereby reducing the need for additional teachers. Do you agree with this assertion?

Substantial evidence from research in supports of the proposition that within broad limits (between 25 and 50 pupils) changes in class size influence pupil achievement modestly or not at all. (page 40)

MUTUMBUKA: Up to a point it is true, but we must be very careful what one is talking about. If one is talking about properly qualified teachers the answer is yes. But if you are talking about a young person who leaves a secondary school at "O" level or Form 2, depending on the country, who has not been taught the tricks of the trade ... in other words is completely untrained ... you cannot expect

a person like that to handle a large class. So one has got to be careful what one is talking about. When you are talking about education systems where the majority of the teachers are untrained, this is just nonsense because people like that are not prepared to handle large classes, they cannot cope. They simply will not be able to mark; they will not be able to set proper exercises, so surely the students will in the final analysis suffer and educational quality will suffer. So I would like to put a proviso to that suggestion: namely, that if you are talking about a system of education where every teacher is properly qualified, the answer is yes; if not, then all sorts of things have to be looked at.

Pre-service Teacher Training

ZJER: Another assertion of the Report is that relatively little pre-service training in education is required, especially for primary school teachers. I believe that Zimbabwe is currently decreasing the duration of its teacher training programme. Do you agree with the Report's recommendations in this area?

The increasing body of evidence on the payoff on various amounts and kinds of teacher training indicates that for primary school teachers preservice training that consists of more than general secondary education and a minimum exposure to pedagogical theory is not cost-effective. (page 40)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, but you have to look at what the Report is trying to say. The Report asserts that a primary school teacher does not need much content, but they do not say what is the minimum content. Do they mean, for example, that to teach in primary school you only have to be a primary school graduate? You have to be a secondary school graduate? What level of secondary school? Because if you look at education systems in Africa ... In this country we have made a ruling which I think is beginning to pay us dividends, that anybody who wants to train as a teacher whether in a secondary school or primary school, must have

a certain minimum content in terms of what they have achieved at the secondary level. Now this does not apply universally in African countries. Some African countries train primary school graduates to become teachers. And yet others train teachers who have graduated from the first two levels of secondary education to become teachers. You have to really qualify what you mean by content – how much content – that is the first thing. The second is that education changes and educational methods change. We have in this country the experience that a lot of our teachers who were trained many years ago cannot cope with modern methods of approach to education: the problems of educational psychology, developmental psychology, all these issues ... problems of children who have learning difficulties. They have never been taught all this, they have a problem in coping with these kinds of problems. One has to be careful what one is saying, otherwise one will end up making all sorts of dangerous generalizations. I would say that in our own experience in this ministry, there is probably nothing more important for the development of an education system than properly qualified primary school teachers. If those youngsters have a good and solid foundation – you can spoil them later on – but if you have that foundation, let it be solid. That is the way we are proceeding ourselves.

ZJER: The report also asserts that in-service teacher training is more cost-effective than pre-service training. Would you care to comment?

In many countries an emphasis on in-service training over preservice training has been found to be cost-effective provided that there is constructive supervision of the training.
(page 41)

MUTUMBUKA: I think they give the example of Tanzania in the Report. Again there you have got some examples in this country ... we are going to do an experiment that Cde Chung and I have been discussing. We even discussed it with the President. In other words what we are

trying to do is to ensure that every person who stands in front of a class must be given some pedagogical training. Whether the training is a month or longer we don't care, but we simply think it is immoral to take a young man or woman and tell them to stand in front of a class without any classroom survival skills. We believe that will have a major impact on the training of youngsters, but really the question of pre- and in-service and so forth, depends on the level. We believe that, as I said in my earlier answer, in primary schools we really have to put into our primary school system teachers who are properly trained and who can actually give a solid foundation to young people. Later on, this ceases to be a major issue and I believe in fact at secondary school that one can have greater flexibility. So that will be my answer to that one.

Teachers' Salaries

ZJER: One of the Report's major areas of concern is teachers' salaries. The Report says that in Africa, teachers appear to be overpaid, relative to other occupations. Do you agree with that assertion?

Primary teachers' salaries in relation to per capita incomes reveal that primary school teachers in Africa... earn relatively more than their counterparts in other regions. (page 46)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes and no. In many African countries, teachers are seen as having a decent salary compared to many of the people because of the nature of African economies. Because there is no industrial base, so many things that are taken for granted in the developed countries, or countries of South-East Asia or Latin America, simply do not exist in Africa. But I would say in general that if African education is to improve, that statement is extremely dangerous because I don't believe that African teachers are overpaid. If they are to perform the kind of job that we expect them to perform it is necessary that they are properly

remunerated. Only in that manner can you attract competent and intelligent people to the profession. If you miss that then you miss it for good.

ZJER: The Report makes a number of suggestions about strategies to lower salaries (at least hourly salaries). Do you believe that this is desirable and/or feasible?

There may be some scope for lowering the overall structure of hourly earnings for primary teachers. (page 46)

MUTUMBUKA: There are many ways you can actually reduce teachers' salaries. If teachers are properly trained you can increase the number of pupils. That is a strategy which we are using in this country. You can also use the double shift method, but not as a strategy of lowering teachers' salaries. It is only a strategy for using to the maximum benefit the facility - the capital expenditures you have used on books, benches, on classrooms, on things like these. In respect of teachers' salaries there are other strategies which perhaps should be looked at, which I find are missing in the Bank Report. For example, if you look at many teachers, the highly trained teachers, especially in secondary schools, they spend a lot of their time doing what I call non-professional work. For example, they supervise students studying in the evening, they supervise students eating in the dining room, they go on the sports fields with the students. All those are contact hours and if you reduced those non-professional hours and you actually said to the teachers, "Look, you have 40 contact hours and those 40 contact hours should be used intelligently for contact with the pupils", then you will be able to increase the pupil/teacher ratio and therefore effectively reduce teachers' salaries. That would be my approach. The question of double shift is dangerous, because I don't believe that a teacher can teach from 6 am to 6 pm. We use the double shift method, but we use different teachers for different shifts, and use the same physical resources, and we find that very satisfactory.

Use of Unqualified Teachers

ZJER: Zimbabwe has devoted substantial resources to improving the qualifications of its teaching force. One of the Report's recommendations is that unqualified teachers be deliberately recruited to reduce salary costs. Would you care to comment on this suggestion?

It is possible and perhaps desirable to recruit teachers who are less well-trained and hence less costly, In view of the modest effects on educational quality (as measured by pupil achievement) of the duration of professional pedagogical training for teachers, recruitment of the more trained group of teachers is not likely to be cost-effective in these countries. (page 47)

MUTUMBUKA: I think that is a very dangerous suggestion because it presupposes that a nation must go out of its way to say, "Because we cannot pay teachers' salaries we must perpetually employ unqualified teachers." That is dangerous because really it is tantamount to saying, "Let us have quack education." It would be the same in medicine to say, "Look we do not have enough doctors who can attend to our patients, and therefore let's have unqualified doctors." We know that they will kill somebody. What they are saying is that a whole generation of young people should go about being taught by unqualified teachers, simply because we do not have the resources. What I think is important is that each nation should work out a programme of teacher education which will ensure that it does not break the backbone of the country. In other words, while you are employing some untrained teachers you must have a definite programme to reduce the number on an annual basis. This is the strategy we have adopted in this country, and you will notice that we have been reducing the number of the untrained teachers on an annual basis. We could not in this country do it overnight, because the budget would be very big. Gradually, any economy can take it.

Delaying Teacher Promotions

ZJER: Another proposal for reducing the salary costs of the teaching force would be to delay promotion of teachers. What impact do you believe this would have on recruitment and retention?

Finally, a country could reduce the average rate at which teachers move from step to step on the salary scale. (page 47)

MUTUMBUKA: As soon as people discover that they will not be promoted because that is the deliberate policy, they will move to another sector. That we know happens everyday. It does not matter whether you have a socialist economy or capitalist economy; they will move from one job to another.

ZJER: Another suggestion for increased use of teachers is double shifting classes, without doubling-up instructional staff. Has this been tried in Zimbabwe? What is your opinion of the concept?

Teaching loads can be increased by increasing the number of classes taught per week or by increasing the number of weeks in the school year. The latter measure offers particular promise in a number of African countries in which the school year is now quite short. Of course, for these measures to increase the pupil teacher ratio, the number of classroom hours must be extended only for teachers and not for pupils. This implies some system of double-shifts... The assumption used here is that in many instances teachers will be willing to accept a reduction in hourly earnings if they have an opportunity to increase their annual earnings by teaching more hours per year (page 48)

MUTUMBUKA: We have never tried to double shift without double shifting the teachers, because education is basically an intellectual exercise. It is a hard job. You were teachers yourselves and you know. People think it's mere talking. Actually it is more difficult to do than to dig in a garden. It is as unproductive as flogging a dead horse. It is unproductive to ask a teacher to teach morning session and afternoon session, because it would become routine and uninspiring.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

School-based versus Job-based Training

ZJER: The Report is generally critical of vocational education programmes, and tends to recommend on-the-job or employer-supplied education as more effective. Zimbabwe is currently piloting a vocational secondary curriculum in a selected sample of schools. Your Ministry is responsible for the vocational/technical colleges; can you comment on that?

First, there is an apparent tendency, particularly in developing countries, to overstate the need to acquire specific skills before employment. Most entry-level jobs require relatively little in the way of specific skills (page 63)

Third, there is mounting evidence that, for many occupation-specific skills categories, the training provided in schools is generally less useful (that is the market demand for it is less strong) than training provided on the job or in specialized training centers. (page 64)

MUTUMBUKA: What I have asked people in the World Bank and other UN specialized agencies, including UNESCO and ILO, is for a thorough study on this question of whether to vocationalize education systems or not. If we look at the case of Tanzania, Tanzania was advised by ILO to

vocationalize its education system even at primary level. A decade later they were told by UNESCO it was a mistake which they should not have made. So there is a lot of conflict, and I think one needs to have a full-blown study of this. Our own view is that pupils are gifted differently and what we have tried to do in our country is to widen the curricula to include some vocational subjects to cater for those students whose aptitudes lie in those areas. After all, what is education? Education must be a preparation for life, for the world of work. It cannot be just something empty. Our attitude has been that we try to vocationalize because that is what we believe is necessary and desirable for the Zimbabwean economy – also, in order to cope with the various ability ranges of our students. In developed countries where you have developed industry etc., it is unnecessary. You have to construct different structures, but if you were to say all technical and vocational education including carpentry must take place after school, what will happen to the children in Murewa, because there is not a single factory there. Does it mean that Murewa will not be expected to produce carpenters for the next 200 years? These are the kind of statements which are taken out of context, because they are looking at the problem of Europe or South-East Asia where there has been heavy industrialization and saying, "Well, in Africa we do not think that will work."

Vocational Training Staff

ZJER: The Report also comments on problems in recruiting and retaining vocational instructors. Would you care to comment on this problem?

Schools have trouble recruiting and retaining competent instructors... (page 64)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, it's a big problem, but what we have tried to do ourselves, as you all know, is to build Belvedere Teachers' College. And we are this year starting to build another teachers' college along the same lines as Belvedere in Chinhoyi, because we are aware that those instruc-

tors who are first trained as artisans are difficult to keep because, again, of salary differentials between education and the private sector. So there are ways of solving the problem – that is, specifically trained teachers who will be able to teach those subjects.

ZJER: The Report also characterizes vocational training as unrealistic and inherently more expensive than academic training. Do you agree?

Separate from the industries for which they train, they generally find it difficult to provide students with realistic work experience.(page64)

Because of the high costs and apparent lack of vocational relevance of both of the school-based approaches to the acquisition of skills, there is an urgent need to develop, through incentive schemes and technical assistance, the capacity of industry to provide on-the-job training and other enterprise-based programs for skills development. (page 64)

MUTUMBUKA: I don't believe that the training is unrealistic. I agree that it's expensive but, as I once said to people in the World Bank, if a country in Africa does not vocationalize its education system because they are worried that it's too expensive they will find that it is even more expensive not to vocationalize. I could give you lots of examples. If we had bought a Jumbo Jet four years ago when they cost sixty million American dollars, it would have been cheaper. Now they cost one hundred and twenty million American dollars. Those countries that do not take measures at the right time will find that it is an even more costly experience to postpone decisions.

ZJER: The Report suggests that the continued reliance on expatriates in key positions, despite high levels of unemployment among university graduates, suggests low quality. Do you agree?

The continuing reliance on expatriates to staff scientific and technical positions, especially in the education sector itself, suggests that inadequate quality may also impede the absorption of graduates into the labor force. (page 72)

MUTUMBUKA: No I don't agree. The continued employment of expatriates differs from country to country. In many Anglophone countries that I know the expatriates that have been recruited are necessary expatriates; whereas in Francophone countries it's part and parcel of the aid package that so many primary school teachers will come from France, so many teacher educators will come from France, so many secondary school teachers will come from France, so I don't agree with this generalization. Whereas it may be applicable to Francophone Africa, it is not applicable to Anglophone Africa, because in many Anglophone African countries that I know, there are some expatriates. In this country we recruit expatriates and we will continue to recruit expatriates for the next ten to twenty years. But we recruit them at secondary school level because we do not have enough. We recruit them at teacher training colleges, because we do not have enough. We recruit them at the University because we do not have enough, we recruit them at technical colleges because we do not have enough, and I don't really believe that one should be unduly worried about that kind of a problem provided the nation itself knows what it is doing and what it wants.

CAPACITY BUILDING R&D

ZJER: The Report asserts that research in African universities has declined and is in jeopardy. Is this your perception?

Although substantiation depends more on anecdotal than empirical evidence, African university staff uniformly report that research in their institutions withered in the 1980s. ... Stagnation or outright decline in research output and in the capacity to produce future researchers jeopardizes Africa's long-run ability to take advantage of the worldwide advance in science and technology. (page 73)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes and no. Of course some of the problems that are pointed out refer to particular institutions. I think they had in mind a university like Makerere, which used to be one of the finest universities in Africa. But we know what is happening in Uganda. We know what the problems have been, and so I think to actually pick that as a typical example is dangerous. I believe that some African universities have really tried to make a tremendous effort in terms of research. If you look at the University of Zimbabwe, especially the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Education – the role that they have played in the expansion of education in establishing the Associate College Centre; the work that has been done with our colleges with the Zintec programme, I think it is false to actually assert that research has just ipso facto declined. What has tended to happen in African universities is that, because of economic recession caused by drought, and by reduction of prices of African commodities on the international market, you cannot replace scientific equipment; you cannot buy up to date equipment; you cannot even maintain your subscription to journals; you can not buy computers which are necessary – as you know from your own Human Resources Research Centre, if we did not have the generosity of the American government through USAID, it would not be possible to have those facilities and yet those facilities are mandatory if you are to keep up with research in education. So I think the decline can actually be traced back to economic problems and that is the real cause.

ZJER: Another criticism of African universities is that members of staff provide too little service through consulting and all too often, government must rely on expatriate experts. Would you comment on this?

The continuing demand for expatriate technical assistance from both public and private sector organizations suggests that there is no lack of tasks requiring the highest levels of academic training and professional experience. Yet, with few exceptions, African universities as institutions and their faculties as individuals do not allocate much time and effort to direct service activities. (page 73)

MUTUMBUKA: I am not really able to comment on that because we don't have that experience in this country ourselves. As I said earlier on, where we have taken in expatriates, we have taken expatriates because they were necessary. Because we simply did not have the people, and since we have to strengthen our institutions and since we have to educate our people we have been forced to do so. But the truth of the matter is that while this [criticism] is applicable to other countries, it certainly is not applicable in the case of Zimbabwe.

ZJER: A pervasive claim in the Report is that the academic quality of African universities is low. Do you agree?

That African graduates may not be knowledgeable as their peers elsewhere in the developing world may be suggested by results of the Graduate Record Examination: the scores of African students on the verbal, quantitative, and analytic sections are uniformly lower than for Latin American, Asian, or Middle Eastern students. (page 74)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, there is some evidence that this is in fact the case. But that again can be traced back to the problems that we have already stated in respect of schools. If the school system does not produce high quality graduates, what can the university do? And if the university professors themselves are not properly paid, they are not motivated to work very hard. They are not motivated to do their teaching functions, they are not motivated to do their research functions, they cannot keep up to date, they are grappling with having to produce food. In Uganda, for example, many university professors started producing their own food because their families had to be fed. Do you really expect people like that to be able to cope with the problems of raising the quality of education? So it is true. Secondly, in some respects teachers cannot get access to up to date equipment. If teachers do not have sabbaticals to go and learn new techniques, if the university cannot provide textbooks, equipment, journals, how can you expect the graduates from African universities to be at par with those from centres where these resources are available and where there are no military conflicts, where people are just engaged in the pursuit of knowledge?

ZJER: Despite low levels of non-salary inputs, the costs per graduate are seen as being excessively high. Do you agree?

Not only does higher education now produce too many graduates Not only are all those outputs of increasingly lower quality than in the past. But the costs per graduate are exorbitantly high. As a percentage of GDP per capita, which is a reasonable proxy for affordability, unit costs (costs per student year) of public higher education are between six and seven times more in sub-Saharan Africa than they are in Asia and nine times more than in Latin America. (page 75)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, in some respects it has been very high and there are probably many reasons for it. I think it's a very complex issue. You have to look at each individual country. I can think of one specific example. If you are going to end up employing a large number of expatriates, obviously the cost of producing that graduate cannot be the same as the country where there are none or very few expatriates being employed. Secondly, if you have got conflict situations and students may sometimes have to be sent home (as happened at the University of Nairobi) then you will get into that kind of situation because it simply will be expecting too much to produce good graduates ... education is an intellectual exercise, and must take place in as calm an atmosphere as is possible. I believe that in a conflict situation where there is no calmness, where there are other interests that pre-occupy people, in that situation certainly education suffers and in those instances the cost of education becomes very expensive.

ZJER: One suggestion in the Report is for the creation of centres of excellence in research and instruction that would serve the region. This would allow Africans to train at other specialized African institutions rather than going abroad. Would you care to comment?

Finally, in the longer term, improvements in quality will be realized and sustained through the establishment of programs - and, in some cases, centers of excellence for postgraduate education and research. These programs or centers could concentrate staff and resources into a critical mass. (page 78)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, I agree that it is necessary that as much training as possible should be done in Africa, where African problems exist. But one of the unfortunate things is that this impinges on what we might call national chauvinism. So very few African countries will be prepared to accept, for example, that our centre of excellence is going to be in Botswana for the SADCC region - because they

will say Gaborone is just a small village and the whole of Botswana has less people than Harare, so how can we have it there. But I believe that this is an important approach and an approach that we must actually as a people accept. Namely, we must choose certain disciplines, certain centres where we simply say we are going to devote our resources to that. For example this agriculture research thing which is being done in conjunction with GTZ where the University of Zimbabwe, Universities of Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania are going to be involved. You need centres of excellence because for a programme like masters degree, if the resource base is not good the product cannot be good. So if you want to develop programmes like masters programmes and doctoral programmes, you need a strong resource base. For example in SADCC, if you look at Lesotho, how can they possibly develop a doctoral programme in veterinary medicine? The resource base is not there. But if we all pulled together and said we are going to do it at Dar es Salaam then it would really have meaning. Or if we said to Lesotho the problem of conservation is very serious, Lesotho, why don't we do a PhD in conservation? In Lesotho then it will pay dividends. So I think that in areas where the countries are small and where we have individual universities in individual countries, the centres of excellence must group a number of countries. In other situations such as Nigeria, for example, Nigeria could have two or three centres of excellence on its own because of the size of the country.

ZJER: A controversial recommendation of the Report is that enrolments at university be deliberately reduced by curtailing intake. Would you care to comment?

Output could be reduced through a (more than proportionate) reduction in the intake of students. The intake to tertiary institutions could be limited by a mix of such measures as tightening up selection criteria by instituting stiffer entrance examinations; (page 79)

MUTUMBUKA: I completely disagree with that. I don't think that it makes sense; we are talking about the need to employ expatriates in Africa and yet here we are saying we must cut enrolment ratios of students at university level. I think this would be a very counter-productive exercise. What we can say is, we must look at the national needs and determine the size of a given faculty; for example, now we have a very serious problem of a shortage of "A" level science teachers. So we can decide as a deliberate policy that the Faculty of Natural Sciences for the next ten years will be increased by so much to cope with those teachers coming from teachers' colleges who want to do the Bachelor of Education degree. Similarly we can increase the intake of Bachelor of Agriculture students if we are short of agriculturalists. We emphasize in that area and when we see that we are satisfied with that quota we can then reduce and emphasize in another faculty. But I don't believe it makes sense to actually reduce the enrolment figures of the university students in the Africa of today.

ZJER: A number of the Report's recommendations have to do with management of the educational sector. In general, the Report finds that education is badly managed; do you agree?

Despite more than two decades of investment in education, management capacity remains strained and insufficiently developed for a combination of reasons. (page 81)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes that's true, because again you can trace it back to the problem of resources. Whenever you go to a Minister of Finance and say I want to build a school and I want to employ teachers, they can actually see a need for that. But as soon as you say in Murewa we would like to employ 50 district education officers, and in Gutu or in Charter we would like to employ another 30 district education officers, they will say, But what will they be doing? And you say, They will be supervising the system. They will say, It is just a waste of money; why don't you have four? I think it is partly the problem of the conceptualization

of the educational process by ministries of economic planning and by ministries of finance, who can identify what is considered as necessary but do not see other inputs into education which would make a difference in terms of quality. On the whole the statement is true.

ZJER: Another management-related theme has to do with de-centralization. Do you agree that this is desirable? What do you see as the advantages of decentralization?

Within the African context, however, there are good reasons for believing that education systems could be made more efficient if certain functions and responsibilities were devolved away from central ministries of education and manpower development. (page 82)

MUTUMBUKA: Decentralization is absolutely necessary. I believe that a good bureaucracy is one where decisions are made as low down the ladder as possible. It is simply nonsensical to expect people in Mutare to ask us if they want to build a primary school at a given centre. That is a local decision. It is nonsensical for them to write to head office if they want to employ a teacher, and the process might take three months, while children are sitting in class without a teacher. So I see decentralization as a major necessity for the development of quality and for the development of education in Africa. And of course the major advantage is that decisions will be taken where they are really needed. That's our experience.

MINISTERIAL ORGANIZATION

ZJER: Two of the Report's recommendations have to do with organization at the ministerial level. Interestingly, the Report suggests moving to a single ministry of education. This seems to run contrary to recent reorganization in Zimbabwe. Would you care to comment?

Certainly those few African countries with three or more such ministries, will wish to consider consolidating these entities into a single ministry. This will encourage the more cohesive development of education policy. (page 84)

MUTUMBUKA: It is true that we have had one Minister of Education and it is not true that we had one Ministry of Education because we have had the Minister of Manpower Planning actually performing an educational function. We have other ministries who also perform an educational function. What the President has tried to do is to streamline this by dividing education into basic education and higher education and, in his own words, he said we will look at it and if it does not work we will amalgamate them. But the real problem in amalgamating them is that it will make one huge Ministry of Education with a huge bureaucracy where decision making would actually become very cumbersome.

ZJER: On the other hand, the Report calls for the creation of a single ministry for overall responsibility for training. Does the new Ministry of Higher Education fulfil that role?

The second sort of structural simplification will be the establishment of an entity responsible for over seeing training with a view to the needs of the national economy. It would track how training activities relate to educational activities and how they related to employers, and it would develop appropriate policies toward training. (page 84-85)

MUTUMBUKA: We believe that the skills that we develop in the technical colleges must have relevance to the world of work. We would like to build structures horizontally and vertically that actually relate to what the employer needs and what the technical college should produce. We want to see really a good symbiotic relationship between the two be-

cause we train people to fit into specific job situations; and it is necessary for the employers to tell us what kind of product they want for us to produce that product.

ZJER: The Report calls for increased efforts directed at increasing the analytic and planning role in education. Do you see a role for the university in some of these functions?

Analysis and planning are central to efficient allocation of resources and, therefore, to the achievement of quality education under conditions of austerity. Educational leaders must be able to assess the performance of their systems and gauge the effects of their policies. (page 86)

MUTUMBUKA: I see a big role for the university in these functions. Unfortunately, in the past our faculties of education in Africa have tended to be very classical faculties of education. They did not look at the problems of education as they face the nation. They did not go to the ministries to ask what the problems were and what role to play. I see that our Faculty of Education now is really beginning to play the role that we expect it to play. It comes to the ministry and says, What do you want us to do for the next five years? What plan? Which people do you want us to train? How do you want us to train them? What products do you want? And you in turn will go to the ministry and say, We think that teachers must be trained this way. If you are training them like this it is not working well. So I see a lot of room for improvement in that area, and I think that developments in the last three to four years are, in my opinion, developments in the right direction and need to be strengthened.

ZJER: Another theme is increased research capacity related to research and training in this area. Would you comment on what can be done in this area?

Considerable effort, centered mostly around training, has been made to develop planning offices and research capacity. The record, however, is not encouraging. (Page 87)

MUTUMBUKA: It is true that it has not been encouraging but that has been really because universities or university faculties have been operating in a vacuum. Ministries of government have often been operating at loggerheads with the university. I have actually heard a minister of education talking about a university in his country saying "That stupid institution", and I asked him, "Isn't it part of your responsibility?" and he said, "These people are crooks, you know; it won't take them a day to come and demonstrate in front of my office". That kind of attitude is extremely dangerous because really it's a "them versus us" kind of situation, and I think as soon as ministries of education realize that universities are servants of the people, servants of government ministries of education, then I think it will be better for all of us.

ZJER: There is a strong call for developing an applied research base and analytic capacity. Do you agree? What role might the university play in these areas?

Another element of strengthening analytic capacity, and a crucially important one, is the development of applied research as the basis for policy analysis. African education research institutions should, of course, play a key role in helping to ensure that research is timely, relevant, and of high quality. Since such institutions are only just beginning to appear in much of Africa, investment to strengthen their capacity and willingness to conduct research in these areas should be high on the agenda for action. (page 87)

MUTUMBUKA: I believe that the university should be the think tank of the problems that affect us. And the university should have a social conscience but at the same time should be sufficiently autonomous to be able to criticize the government: not to criticize aimlessly, but to criticize in a constructive manner; to say, Look, we think that the structure of education that you have got will not work for the following reasons and we have analysed it, we have had people working on a masters degree, on a doctoral thesis; we have our people in the faculty who have actually done papers on this. They have gone out, evaluated this thing and discovered that it will not work for various reasons. So I see really a phenomenal role for faculties of education in this respect. That's my appreciation.

ZJER: The Report asserts that the region gets more than its share of international assistance. Do you agree?

With only about 11 percent of the population of the world's developing countries, Sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1980s was receiving about 22 percent of international aid. The annual allotment of such aid to Sub-Saharan Africa for all purposes, education included, is equivalent to about \$19 per inhabitant, compared with \$8 per inhabitant in the other developing regions. (page 101)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, it may be true that Africa is getting a bigger percentage of donor aid in the field of education compared to its population. But I think you cannot just look at the question of population -- you should look at the level of education in Africa, and that is really what should determine the level of aid. I don't believe that it makes sense ... for example, countries like Mongolia may not be well developed but education is well developed; what would be the point of pouring money into the education sector of such a country? I think that the problem in Africa must be looked at in the context of Africa. In other words, Africa may have a smaller population than many other parts of the

world, but I believe that it is much more deserving in terms of educational aid because of the backwardness of education in Africa, and that might be the criterion.

ZJER: The Report criticized bilateral donors for the share of aid going to primary education. Would you care to categorize bi-lateral versus international assistance?

Among bilateral donors, the lack of balance is even more dramatic: less than 4 percent of their direct aid goes for primary education and 42 percent for tertiary. (page 103)

MUTUMBUKA: Well, that is a very controversial question. The truth of the matter is that in the recent past, particularly with the withdrawal by the United States and Britain from UNESCO, it has become very clear that these two nations, particularly under President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher, are trying to shift away from multilateral aid because they believe that they do not control what happens, but if they have bilateral aid they can control what happens. So I think you must look at the problem in the context of the politics of the regimes in those two countries. That is the politics of control. We ourselves believe that there is room in supporting education for both. If you look at the case of the Nordic countries, all the Nordic countries support both aspects of aid. They support the bilateral assistance because it has got its own usefulness, its own immediate applicability. They also support multilateral aid because there are activities that lend themselves to multilateral assistance. For example, we have common problems in SADCC: it can be the eradication of illiteracy, it can be the eradication of tsetse fly, it can be communication links in Africa, and those kinds of problems lend themselves better to multilateral assistance than they do to bi-lateral assistance. So my own view is that there is room for both, but you must understand that this is a separate issue from the politics of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Reagan.

ZJER: The report is particularly critical of bilateral donors for directing most aid at technical assistance which, in effect, employs their own nationals. What is your opinion of the usefulness of such technical assistance? Do recipient countries have enough say in the form assistance should take? In general, would recipients prefer more commodities and less technical assistance?

The predilection of technical assistance is most marked in the case of the bilateral donors. Each of the four major bilateral donors dedicates at least 55 percent of its direct education aid to technical assistance, which in essence provides employment in Africa for its own professionals. (page 105)

MUTUMBUKA: Yes, that is true in respect of the assistance particularly from France. It's not always true if you look at assistance from other donors. I don't know who the giant four are supposed to be. I can think of the United States, Britain and France. Perhaps Germany is the next one but I don't believe that it is completely true that bilateral assistance to education has always taken that form. For example, the United States USAID in this country – under the BEST programme there have been very few Americans actually coming to work here. In the French programmes ... yes, I think in some cases they have told us that 80 percent goes towards paying French expatriate teachers. That is a different style altogether. But I don't think you can always say that in bilateral assistance that is what happens. In the case of Britain it is probably half. You know that is our experience but I don't think it is always true. It is true for certain donors, but it is not always universally true.

ZJER: The Report calls for the international community to develop a cadre of non-political technical experts to assist African governments in planning and evaluation. Would you support such a proposal? Is there any reason why such a cadre could not be formed and staffed by African countries themselves, with finance coming from the donor community?

Third, the international community could establish and finance a source of high-quality technical expertise that is nonpolitical and beholden to no international donor or government in particular. African governments could call upon this expertise for help in formulating policies at the outset and in monitoring, evaluating, and correcting them during implementation. (page 108)

MUTUMBUKA: That is what I have repeatedly said at our meetings. I said that I agree that we need a cadre of people who will be able to support, to assist, because there are some countries in Africa which do not even have their own. There are countries where you don't have enough people who could even write a project report. I know it sounds silly when you are saying it here in Zimbabwe, but it is true that there are some countries in Africa where you couldn't get even one individual who could write a project report. And so I support the proposal that we need a core of cadres who can play this role. But as I said in the beginning, because this basically is an African problem, the African must play a crucial role. But I don't accept and I don't agree that only Africans possess the monopoly of wisdom for solving African problems. I think since it is their problem, they must be in the forefront, in the trench lines, but the other people must also support them.

ZJER: The Report calls strongly for increasing the capacity of African institutions to conduct research and graduate training of "world class standards". Do you agree with this recommendation? Do you feel that basing the cadre of technical experts at a major African university would contribute to this process? Would the Government of Zimbabwe be willing to develop such a cadre/centre at the national university?

Africa must intensify efforts to develop its own capacity to conduct research and to provide postgraduate education and research training of world class standards. (page 112)

MUTUMBUKA: I believe that it is necessary to have, as I have said, such a centre of excellence. I don't think that we should have just one in Africa. We should have many. And they should specialize in areas which are achievable and should be able to produce cadres of international repute. I should for example like people to come to Zimbabwe and study tobacco culture, because we have some of the most advanced tobacco producing capacities in the world both in terms of quality and quantity. They can also go to Malawi and study fresh fish. We should be able to produce those centres of excellence. I don't see any reason why we cannot do it. But you know at the moment that it is a political problem, because we know that a student who leaves Africa and goes to study in Europe is seen as a beggar. But what is the reality? The reality is that that student contributes enormously to the world pool of knowledge, simply by being there. All those of us who have been teachers know that every new class of students that you teach contains a sizeable number of pupils who are cleverer than you or potentially cleverer than you. And insofar as they are in your class they force you to change your lectures, they force you to change your methodology, your approach to a particular problem etc. That's a contribution they make. They are not just passive onlookers, they really are participating in the world's pool of knowledge. So I believe that Africa needs those centres of excellence and not third rate places. I believe that the University of Zimbabwe will be prepared to participate in some activities of that nature wherever it is possible and if asked to participate in such a scheme.

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