Preamble

The 8th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8), co-organised by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Open University Malaysia (OUM) in Kuala Lumpur from 27-30 November 2016,

Mindful of relevant international statements including:

The Charter of the Commonwealth 2013, which recognises the necessity of affordable education for sustainable development;

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 4 of ensuring “inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”;

UNESCO’s Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, Education 2030, which sets as target 4.3 that “by 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university” and elaborates that ‘a well-established, properly regulated tertiary education system supported by technology, open educational resources and distance education can increase access, equity, quality and relevance’ (item 43); and

The 2012 UNESCO-COL Paris Declaration on Open Educational Resources (OER) which advocates that States “facilitate enabling environments for use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)”. 
A. Recommends that governments, institutions, the private sector and civil society:

1. **Promote lifelong learning** through the widespread availability of appropriate technologies and multilingual opportunities in formal, non-formal and informal learning which are open to people, places, methods and ideas;

2. **Reinforce market-driven skills development** using open and distance learning (ODL) and blended and flexible learning in collaboration with education, industry, agriculture and service sectors to empower and ensure sustainable livelihoods for all;

3. **Encourage demand driven and context-specific research and innovation in technology** to promote access, equity and lifelong learning;

4. **Institutionalise a quality culture** in ODL systems focusing on learners’ learning outcomes;

5. **Support teacher education and in-service teacher training with ODL and blended and flexible learning**, and increase the supply of qualified teachers;

6. **Mainstream the use of OER** by developing strategies and policies at governmental and institutional levels to enhance quality while potentially reducing the cost of education;

7. **Emphasise the key role of leadership** in strengthening learner-centred ODL which can widen access, enhance equity and gain respectability;

8. **Ensure that the education of women and girls through ODL is given utmost importance** with a targeted approach, in support of SDG 5;

9. **Strengthen ODL** that is inclusive and accessible to all persons with disabilities; and

10. **Reinforce commitment to small island developing states and small states** in their efforts to advance education and learning with ODL, in tackling their particular economic, energy and climate change challenges, and in building their resilience for the future.

B. Brings the above recommendations to the next Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) for further consideration and implementation.

Kuala Lumpur, 30 November 2016