COL President and CEO Professor Asha Kanwar and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Day 3 of PCF8.

The organisations agreed to cooperate on two key common objectives: promoting gender equality in education and learning; and ensuring that women and girls acquire relevant skills for decent employment and economic empowerment, through technology-driven forms of learning avenues and measuring these outcomes.

Professor Kanwar said that each organisation brings an important contribution to the partnership. She pointed to UN Women’s expertise in gender and their global network, and highlighted COL’s expertise in distance, blended, flexible and technology-based approaches, as well as its network of committed partners from across the Commonwealth.

“With all those elements, which supplement and complement each other, we should be off to a good start,” she said.

“With girls, women and SDGs, it’s a context that’s between now and 2020.” Said Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka. “We take these good initiatives that we have and we see how much we can scale them. Our aim is that by 2020, we can begin to show the trends, whether the SDGs are truly taking us where we want to go.”

A key activity of the partnership will be collaboration in preparing and sharing open educational resources.

“Our aim is that by 2020, we can begin to show the trends, whether the SDGs are truly taking us where we want to go.”
COL recognised outstanding achievement in this year’s Excellence in Distance Education Awards (EDEA). The awards acknowledge that excellence is being achieved at many points in the learning process: at the institutional level, in the development of learning materials and in terms of individual educator and student attainment.

EDEA are only presented every three years and this year’s winners represent some of the best individuals and institutions from across the Commonwealth.

The winners are:

- Award of Excellence for Institutional Achievement
  National Institute of Open Schooling

- Award of Excellence for Open and Distance Education Materials
  Open University Malaysia

- Award of Excellence for Open and Distance Education Materials
  Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

- Award of Excellence for an eLearning Experience in Difficult Circumstances
  Elvis Amenia

- The Award of Excellence for Distance Learning Experience in a Degree Granting Programme
  Clement Ndahani
The third Keynote Address was delivered by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka under the theme “Access and Inclusion”.

Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka said: “Over the years I have closely followed this forum, including the discussions you have had this time, the need for governments and academic institutions to recognise the limitations of classroom-based learning has become even more obvious,” said Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka.

“Distance learning has come a long way. The distance is no more the issue. The access is the issue. But even as the access has been addressed, even as the access is made possible, it is not a given.”

“The sustainable development goals are exactly about inclusion,” said Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka. “They are about leaving no one behind. They are about looking at those that are in the last mile, at the back of the queue, and those that are invisible. And therefore, when we talk about access and inclusion, it has to be from the perspective of those that are at risk of being left behind.”

Ministers gathered for a roundtable on Day Three of PCF8 to discuss open, online and flexible learning, and sustainable development. Issues of access and capacity were key discussion points. The Ministers in attendance were: Honourable Macsuzy Mondon, Seychelles; Honourable Mr. Phineas Magagula, Swaziland; Honourable Professor Anthony Anuwukah, Nigeria; Honourable Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang, Ghana; and Honourable Dr. Unity Dow, Botswana.

Measuring Empowerment Toolkit

COL launched Measuring Empowerment Toolkit: Using the Commonwealth of Learning’s Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework, a toolkit designed for development practitioners, government officials, academics, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and researchers who are interested in measuring empowerment.

It includes a framework for measuring empowerment, developed by COL, for use by development practitioners and action researchers to develop their own empowerment surveys and calculate an empowerment index. The Three-Dimensional Empowerment Framework was initially developed as a tool for creating a survey instrument to assess empowerment among male and female participants in COL’s Lifelong Learning for Farmers Programme.

It is available at http://hdl.handle.net/11599/2468
Around the Forum

Participants at the Keynote Address

Parallel Session Participants

Parallel Session Participants

Parallel Session Participants

Q&A Session

Presenting a Paper

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Participants at the Keynote Address

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Chair: Dr. Linda Sissons, CNZM
President & CEO: Professor Asha S. Kanwar

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