

# *Promoting Respect and Understanding: the Work of the Commonwealth of Learning*

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*17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers,  
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Session*

*Promoting Respect and Understanding: The Work of  
the Commonwealth of Learning*

*By Sir John Daniel, Commonwealth of Learning*

## **Transcript**

Honourable Ministers:

It is a pleasure to tell you what the Commonwealth of Learning is doing to further the Commonwealth agenda of Respect and Understanding.

The context is that the Secretary-General has asked COL to take the lead in deploying media and learning technologies to promote Respect and Understanding and the concepts contained in the report, Civil Paths to Peace, especially to – and with – the young people who make up half the population of the Commonwealth.

We are doing this through three activities:

Under the first a number of Commonwealth universities will pool their multi-media materials on topics related to respect and understanding in order to enrich the courses and programmes that they offer in related areas. So far the list is made up of:

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN);  
The National Teachers' Institute, Nigeria;  
The University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago campus;  
UTech, Jamaica;  
UNISA – the University of South Africa;  
Indira Gandhi National Open University, India; and  
The Open University of Malaysia.

This work is being coordinated by my colleague our Higher Education Specialist, Dr Willie Clarke-Okah.

In the second area of activity we are making video recordings of prominent Commonwealth figures who have been directly involved in mediating conflicts and in issues of respect and understanding generally. We are making some more recordings at this conference and are on the look out for volunteers. So far the list includes:

The Secretary-General, H.E. Kamalesh Sharma;  
Professor Amartya Sen;  
The Honourable Zahiya Zareer, former Minister of Education, Maldives; and  
Lord John Alderdice.

This activity is being carried out by my colleague Dr Ramamurthy Sreedher, Director of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia in New Delhi, under the guidance of COL's Vice-President, Professor Asha Kanwar.

The third activity is at an embryonic stage but potentially very exciting. That is to get hundreds of Commonwealth youth to contribute 5-minute 'YouTube' videos on respect and understanding in their communities and create a portal for them. We welcome partners and collaborators for this work.

Finally, let me note that in presenting his report to Heads of Government, Professor Amartya Sen stressed the absolute importance of the role of governments in driving forward this agenda. We hope that as one aspect of this you will encourage people in your countries to participate in this work and suggest partners to us through which we can involve your young people in this endeavour.

Thank you