

PCF7 NEWS FLASH



COL'S 7TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM



COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

7th Pan-Commonwealth Conference Flags Off in Abuja



**International Conference Centre, Abuja
2nd December, 2013**

7th Pan-Commonwealth Conference Flags Off in Abuja

The 7th Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF7) kicked off at the International Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria, on Monday.

The Forum is being jointly organized by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Vancouver, Canada, the Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria (FMEN) and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

The five day programme is designed to explore applications of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in widening educational access, bridging the digital divide, and advancing the social and economic development of communities and nations at large.

The focus of the forum is on topics relating to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the Commonwealth nations.

The forum has 5 key themes: *Girls Education, Skills Development, Promoting the use of Open Education Resources (OER), Innovation and Technology, and Institutional Building.*

The forum brought together stakeholders from governments, educational institutions and professionals from Open and Distance Learning institutions and practitioners from Commonwealth countries.

Through discussions, social media networks and panel presentations, participants will share ideas and help to set agenda for using Open and Distance Learning to activate international developments through widening educational access, bridging the digital divide and applying advances in connecting technology to teaching and learning for development of communities and nations at large.

The Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held biennially. It is co-hosted by different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth countries.



Prof. Olugbemiro Jegede former VC NOUN & Sec. to Government, Kogi State of Nigeria - Lead Workshop Facilitator



Prof. Jegede and VC NOUN Prof. Vincent Ado Tenebe, Chairman PCF7 Pre-Conference workshop



VC NOUN Prof. Vincent Ado Tenebe, Chairman PCF7 Pre-Conference workshop in warm handshake with Prof. Jegede



Participants



Participants



Participants



Dr. Nsema - MIT, U.S.A. ICT Specialist



Dr. Ben Akor, University of Manitoba, Canada Workshop Facilitator



Prof. Mba Okoronkwo, Dean School Science & Technology - Chairman - LOC PCF7



Participants



The media team at the workshop



Explore the Gains of PCF7 to Enhance Service Delivery – Professor Tenebe



Vice Chancellor, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Professor Vincent Ado Tenebe

The vice chancellor of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Professor Vincent Ado Tenebe, has charged delegates to the 7th Pan Commonwealth Forum (PCF7) to explore the new insights they would gain at the PCF7 conference to improve upon their service delivery.

Professor Tenebe gave the charge in his opening remarks at the PCF7 pre-conference workshop held at the Benue Hall of the International Conference Centre ICC Abuja. “I encourage all participants in this conference to gather knowledge to train others since the workshop is a train the trainers’ workshop, and to use the knowledge gathered at the event to improve on their service delivery.”

He hoped that the knowledge gathered at the workshop, which is an initiative of the pioneer vice chancellor of NOUN, Professor Olugbemiro Jegede, would be put to proper use to enhance service delivery. After pouring encomium on his former teachers- Professors Olugbemiro Jegede and Israel Adu, the vice chancellor formally declared the workshop open.

Earlier, Professor Israel Adu, Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, NOUN, while welcoming delegates to the pre-conference workshop, enjoined them to make the maximum benefit of what they would get from the workshop.

According to Professor Adu, it is important for delegates to take advantage of the benefits gained at the conference because “since we live in a world of changes and have been witnesses of what technology

is doing to change the world, it is imperative that we follow the trend so that we are not left behind.”

He underscored the importance of social media in teaching and learning, especially in ODL system.

The 7th Pan-Commonwealth Forum is being held in Abuja, Nigeria from December 2-6 2013. One of the highlights of the global conference was the pre-conference workshop which has as its theme ‘Social Media as Teaching and Learning Tool in ODL in non-Western Society.

The workshop started at 11.35am with eminent scholars from Nigeria, Canada and the United States of America (USA), as facilitators. The facilitators include Professor Olugbemiro Jegede, an IT Specialist and at present, Secretary to the Kogi State Government in Nigeria; Dr. Nsema, a digital personality and social media specialist associated with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); and Professor Ben Akor, a Programme Manager at Manitoba University, Canada, whose research area is *Culture, Technology and Sustainable Development*.

The three eminent scholars engaged the participants in the following areas of social media: *Introducing social media for technology and learning: mapping out expectations; Identity and Privacy considerations for Technology and learning; Engaging in Networks, Lurking and Legitimate peripheral participation; and Lifelong learning.*

Participants were drilled in lectures, group discussions, hands-on and assignments. Overall, the workshop was a successful kick-start of the PCF7



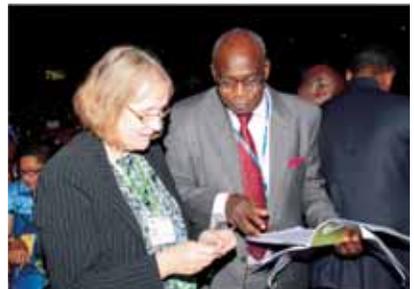
CROSS SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE 7TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Prof. Vincent Ado Tenebe VC NOUN



Dave Wilson
PCF7 Coordinator, COL Vancouver, Canada



CROSS SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE 7TH PAN-COMMONWEALTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Prof. Ashar Kanwar, President, COL



Supervising Minister, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria



Amb. Mariam Y. Katagum, Nigeria Permanent Rep. to UNESCO



Group pix of PCF7 Executives



Group pix of PCF7 Executives



Group pix of PCF7 Executives



EMPOWERMENT IS THE PROCESS OF EXPANDING THE CHANCES OF DISEMPOWERED COMMUNITIES – Asha Kanwar



Chief Executive Officer and President Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Professor Asha Kanwar

The Chief Executive Officer and President Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Professor Asha Kanwar, has said that empowerment is the process of expanding the chances of disempowered communities. She stated this at the grand Opening Ceremony of 7th Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF7) held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja, on Monday.

While welcoming delegates and participants, Professor Kanwar expressed sincere thanks to the Federal Ministry of Education and NOUN for hosting PCF7. She explained that the vice chancellor, Prof. Vincent Ado Tenebe, along with his team has taken personal interest in planning this conference.

She explained that the Pan-Commonwealth Forum conferences are held in different parts of the Commonwealth. The first was held in Brunei, followed by those held in South Africa, New Zealand, Jamaica, United Kingdom and India. Her words, “After travelling round the

Commonwealth, Pan-Commonwealth Forum has returned to the heart of Africa.” She said.

Professor Kanwar used the opportunity to thank the Federal Government of Nigeria for providing financial and intellectual support. She also expressed appreciation for the partnership between the NOUN and NTI, and stressed that COL has supported the establishment of a Regional Center for Research and Training in Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDAL) for West Africa at NOUN. “RETRIDAL,” she said, “has become a hub for training activities related to Open and Distance Learning in the region.”

Professor Kanwar explained that societies cannot be transformed without the empowerment of their different constituencies; stating that empowerment is the process of expanding the chances of disempowered communities. “Education and learning are important in the development process,” she said.



Federal Government to Empower NOUN to Create Access to Education



Supervising Minister of Education, Honourable Barrister Nyesom Wike

The Federal Government of Nigeria has pledged to empower the National Open University of Nigeria to enable the institution to increase access to education for the teeming Nigerian youth. This revelation was made by the Supervising Minister of Education, Honourable Barrister Nyesom Wike, who represented the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, at the 7th Pan Commonwealth Forum in Abuja on Monday.

In his address, on behalf of the president, the minister said he was greatly honoured to welcome all international and national delegates to the 7th Pan-Commonwealth Forum. He also expressed his gratitude to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for choosing Nigeria as host of the important conference. "This singular honour," the minister said, "goes a long way to show that Nigeria's humble effort in transforming her education is being recognised outside."

The minister seized the opportunity to congratulate the vice chancellor of the National

Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Prof Vincent Ado Tenebe, for contesting and winning the hosting rights of the PCF7 amongst other contesting nations.

The minister especially acknowledge the limited available access to higher education experienced by the teeming population of our youth seeking higher education, and noted the special place of NOUN in providing access to higher education through the Open and Distance Learning.

The minister promised that the federal government through the federal ministry of education will partner with NOUN through the YOUWIN programme to train youths in the area of information technology.

While congratulating the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) on her 25th anniversary, the minister recognised the leadership role of COL in the provision of ODL and noted that Open and Distance Learning as a viable way to further enhance the educational sector towards ensuring economic development of the nation.

Hon. Wike, while wishing all delegates a beautiful stay in Abuja, declared the conference open on



OPEN LEARNING KEY TO PRESIDENT JONATHAN'S EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION AGENDA – Professor Tenebe



NOUN VC, Prof. Vincent Ado Tenebe

The vice chancellor of the National Open University NOUN Prof. Vincent Ado Tenebe has identified open learning as key to President Goodluck Jonathan's education transformation agenda for the Nigerian nation.

Describing the president as a man who is passionate about education as a tool for empowerment and transformation, Prof. Tenebe said the theme of the 7th Pan Commonwealth forum is 'Open Learning for Development: Towards Empowerment and Transformation', with Girls and Women, Open Education Resources (OER), Innovation and Technology and Institutional Development as sub themes could not have come at a better time than now, under the administration of a dynamic

government that is bent on rejuvenating Nigeria. 'The theme is in tandem and in total agreement with the political agenda of our indefatigable president, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR. It is therefore not a coincidence that this important conference is being hosted by Nigeria but rather divine and predestined'

The Vice-Chancellor of NOUN urged Nigerians and all other delegates at the conference to take full advantage of the conference for personal and societal empowerment and transformation. He particularly called on Nigeria and the whole of Africa to 'take advantage and maximize all the benefits derivable from this golden opportunity' of hosting the conference.

It would be recalled that NOUN since its establishment has been on the fore front in the campaign for access and democratization of educational opportunities in Nigeria, hence the vision and mission statements of the institution centre around the provision of highly accessible and enhanced quality education, anchored by social justice, equity, equality and national cohesion.

With a student population of well over 180,000 and 52 study centers across the country, NOUN stands out as the largest university in Nigeria and in the West Africa Sub-region. Hence the management of the West Africa's premier Open and Distance Learning University can proudly beat their chest and hold their heads high that they are gradually achieving the fundamental mandate of the institution as well as enhancing the realization of the transformation agenda of the administration of president Goodluck Jonathan, the Education for All EFA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations.