Heads of Government urge increased support for COL

Commonwealth Heads of Government, holding their biennial meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, last November endorsed the continuing work of The Commonwealth of Learning.

Forming a part of the final communiqué agreed upon and issued by the leaders at the conclusion of their summit, the report from the Committee of the Whole “acknowledged that the Commonwealth had, through COL, been able to play a leading role in furthering the application of distance education and open learning to meet the human resource development needs of its member countries. This will enable COL to help fulfil the Commonwealth commitment of ‘education for all’ and ensure, in particular, that this will extend education to girls, the disabled and marginalised groups through the application of distance education technologies.”

The report further “expressed appreciation for the impressive progress made by COL since its establishment,” but also “expressed concern that despite COL’s impressive achievements and the increasing demands for its services, the organisation faced a financial crisis which had necessitated a narrowing of the scope of its activities.”

Heads of Government responded by also endorsing the report’s call for action, urging member governments to “reaffirm their support strongly and to review their financial commitment to COL.”

On Commonwealth Day, March 11, 1996, UK Overseas Development Minister, the Right Honourable Baroness Chalker, announced further funding for COL, extending Britain’s commitment to March 1999, and stated that “Britain endorses the valuable work of The Commonwealth of Learning in expanding access to education.” “The demand for distance learning in developing countries is increasing and COL is well placed to provide much needed educational opportunities,” she said.

• Learn to Race: A coach’s guide to a bicycle racing skill course for beginners video and accompanying booklet (Canadian Cycling Association)
• Field Hockey — Level one skills video (Field Hockey Canada)
• Shuttle — Badminton skills development programme Instructor’s Manual and Instructor’s Implementation Guide (Badminton Canada); certain exclusions apply
• Canoe Kids — A skill development awards programme in canoeing and kayaking sprint racing: Instructor’s Handbook, a recruitment kit, a recruitment brochure, and a Canoe Kids Fun Book (Canadian Canoe Association)
• National Coaching Certificate Programme — Fundamentals of coaching volleyball level 1: Coaches Manual and companion Basic Skills video, along with the 1994/95 Rulebook (Volleyball Canada)

Distribution rights to this material have been provided to The Commonwealth of Learning free-of-charge by these Canadian sporting organisations, while COL is covering the costs of duplication and distribution. On behalf of Commonwealth member governments, COL gratefully acknowledges this contribution to the development of sporting programmes world-wide.

For further details on the material and information on obtaining copies, please contact COL’s Public Affairs Office in Vancouver.
Evaluating open learning
Marketing open learning
Managing open learning
Administering open learning
Tutoring learners
Advising and guiding learners
Designing and developing open learning materials
Finding open learning materials
Evaluating open learning

Further information and requests may be directed to COL's Canada Office. The fourth edition of COL's Directory of Courses and Materials for Training in Distance Education, and a new COL publication, Producing Gender Sensitive Learning Materials A Handbook for Educators are also now available (see page 4).

COL has successfully negotiated a licensing agreement, on behalf of developing Commonwealth countries, for the use and adaptation of materials from the UK Open College's The Blueprint Series. The distance education training series consists of the following modules:

- Finding open learning materials
- Designing and developing open learning materials
- Advising and guiding learners
- Tutoring learners
- Administering open learning
- Managing open learning
- Marketing open learning
- Evaluating open learning

Audio-graphics teleconferencing systems were installed at the UKM Faculty of Medicine with remote sites at base hospitals in four regional locations. The network has since been successfully used to provide the delivery of a training programme in family medicine.

So successful, in fact, that in late 1995, UKM moved toward expanding the network by an additional 40 sites. By enlisting COL's technical assistance and buying power, Malaysia was able to obtain the requisite equipment from a Canadian manufacturer, DETAC Corporation, of Red Deer (Innisfail), Alberta, at considerable cost savings. This arrangement also contributed to boosting COL's purchasing position on behalf of all Commonwealth countries.

By July 1996, all other UKM post graduate medical education will employ strategies based on the successful family medicine programme. Distance education delivery by the University in the mathematics and business administration fields will also be launched this year, using the same network facilities.

In recognition of her pioneering work as project co-ordinator for the Malaysian Health Network, Professor Sharifah H. Shahabudin, Director of UKM's Department of Medical Education, received a COL/International Council for Distance Education Award of Excellence in June 1995 at a ceremony in Birmingham, England. In establishing the Malaysian Health Network, Professor Shahabudin was responsible for launching the first distance teaching programme at her institution and the first medical distance teaching programme in Malaysia.

COL in Africa

- COL convened an expert group meeting on educational media resources for Southern Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe; March 14–15, 1996). Participants were drawn from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This is a continuation of COL's efforts to promote regional cooperation in the use of communications and information technologies in open and distance learning. The Expert Group also examined the feasibility of establishing a Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Southern Africa.
- COL was invited to provide professional input at three key meetings held recently in Southern Africa. The Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa and the Commonwealth Nurses

COL in the Asia/Pacific Region

- COL and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) have been in discussion over the past several months on formally establishing a long-term working relationship. With headquarters in Bangkok, SEAMEO promotes cooperation among the nine Southeast Asian nations through projects in education, science and culture. Under the SEAMEO umbrella, twelve institutions operating as regional centres conduct research, publish, and offer vocational and teacher training in specialized fields such as languages, tropical biology, tropical medicine and public health, educational innovation and technology, science and mathematics education, non-formal education, and higher education development. Due to rapidly increasing costs of moving trainees around Southeast Asia, SEAMEO is considering other ways of delivering training. It is in this context...
On December 7, 1995, COL and the Commonwealth of Learning were supported by the organisation’s intention to work with COL. COL President, Dr. Gajaraj Dhanarajan, who had been invited to observe the proceedings of the SEAMEO ministerial meeting, also confirmed COL’s willingness to work with the SEAMEO institutions in developing their distance education capacities. Both organisations are expected to work out a detailed proposal for the consideration of their respective boards.

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) has published the inaugural issue of Edu Comn Asia. The quarterly newsletter will provide information on the application of educational technology in open and distance learning, as well as news about media-related activity at institutions throughout the region. Located at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (New Delhi), CEMCA was established by COL in 1994 to promote co-operation and collaboration in technical applications among educational institutions and media organisations. It also serves as a regional resource centre, facilitating the exchange of audio/video productions.

On December 7, 1995, COL and the Colombo Plan Staff College for Technical Education (Manila, Philippines) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen co-operation in the development and delivery of technical/vocational education and training (TVET) using distance education methods. One aspect of the agreement is the joint development of a training plan for senior TVET personnel from the Asia-Pacific region for implementing distance education in their programmes — and jointly seeking support from funding agencies.

### Events

- **Media training:** COL convened a meeting of experts to create curriculum blueprints for training materials on distance learning in the field of media integration for open and distance learning — hosted at the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 29 November – 1 December 1995. The results of the meeting form the basis for the development of three training courses, which would be available by distance and directed at educational/media policy-makers and planners, subject matter experts, and media producers.

- **Learning materials:** Meetings to explore new forms of Commonwealth partnerships, in the development and sharing of distance learning materials among institutions throughout the Commonwealth were convened by COL via audio-teleconferences with Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Hong Kong, New Zealand, South Africa, and South Asia from 31 January – 7 February, 1996. As a result of these meetings, work is now progressing on the development of a COL/Commonwealth co-operation agreement and set of protocols.

- **RGFS tutor training:** An orientation programme for Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship

### People

An interview with COL’s new President, Dr. Gajaraj (Raj) Dhanarajan, was conducted by Alan Tait (UK Open University) and appeared in a recent issue of The American Journal of Distance Education (Vol. 9 No. 3 1995). Asked where he thought research priorities in distance education should be concentrated in the next few years, Dr. Dhanarajan replied, “I come from a learner’s perspective on this question. I am not sure how many sufficient and one important aspect of the agreement is the joint development of a training plan for senior TVET personnel from the Asia-Pacific region for implementing distance education in their programmes — and jointly seeking support from funding agencies.

### COL in the Caribbean

- Under a World Bank project, the Ministry of Education in Trinidad & Tobago is embarking on the professional upgrading of 1000 primary school principals. The programme will be based on work toward an accredited Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree, through distance teaching methods. COL has provided information and advice to the Government and to some organisations that have submitted bids for appointment as executing agent. COL has also offered to be the executing agent itself.
- The Commonwealth of Learning was among the recipients of awards presented by the University of the West Indies’ Continuing Education Programme

Teacher training: The Planning, Design and Management of Distance Learning — Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania: 26 - 29 February, 1996. Participants agreed on a set of design principles. In consultation with group members, C.O.L. will now prepare a detailed proposal and take steps to seek funding to assist with development on behalf of Commonwealth Governments.

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Ministers of Education are holding their annual meeting this year in Barbados: 22 - 26 April 1996. C.O.L. will again be represented in an observer capacity.

Educational Technology 2000: A Global Vision for Open and Distance Learning — Singapore: 15 - 17 August 1996. This major conference and integrated exhibition on educational technology is sponsored jointly by The Commonwealth of Learning and the Asian Mass Communications Research and Information Centre (AMIC).

Educational planners, policy-makers, academics, and educational media specialists will interact with industry representatives, from the major international designers and suppliers of educational technology and media, to address the potential of emerging technologies to deal with the challenges of mass education. (The dates and venue for the conference have been recently changed to those noted above.)

World Congress of Associations without Borders — Vancouver, BC, Canada: 20 - 23 April 1996. (Contact the Canadian Society of Association Executives at 40 University Avenue, Suite 1104, Toronto, Ontario M5J 1T1 Canada; tel: 416-596-6433; fax: 604-657-7994; World Wide Web: http://www.asaenet.org/Membership/Sections/International/wca96.html)

The Planning, Design and Management of Distance Learning for a Changing World, an intensive workshop for policy makers, offered by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in cooperation with UNESCO’s Learning Without Frontiers programme (conducted in English) — Paris: 10 - 14 June 1996. (Contact IIEP at 7 - 9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116 Paris, France; tel: 33-1-45-03-77-00; fax: 33-1-40-72-83-66; e-mail: iiep@iiep.unesco.org)

11th Commonwealth Law Conference, hosted by the Canadian Bar Association in conjunction with its Annual Meeting — Vancouver, BC, Canada: 25 - 29 August 1996. (Contact the CBA at 50 O’Connor Street, Suite 902, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2 Canada; tel: 613-237-2925; fax: 613-237-2926; e-mail: info@cba.org; World Wide Web: http://cba.org/abc/annmeet.html)

International Conference on Distance and Open Learning, organised by the Centre for Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, in commemoration of their Silver Jubilee — Penang, Malaysia: 27 February - 1 March 1997. The theme is Information Technology in Distance and Open Learning. A call for papers and expressions of interest has been issued. (Contact the Conference Secretariat at the Centre for Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia; fax: 60-4-657-6000; e-mail: ahmm@usm.my)

The New Learning Environment: A Global Perspective is the theme of the 18th World Conference of the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) — The Pennsylvania State University, 2 - 6 June 1997. A call for papers has been issued. (Contact ICDE ’97, c/o The Pennsylvania State University, Continuing and Distance Education, Conferences and Institutes, 211 M Mitchell Building, University Park, PA 16802-3601, USA; tel: 814-863-5127; fax: 814-863-5190; e-mail: icde97@cde.psu.edu; World Wide Web: http://www.cde.psu.edu/ICDE/)

New Publications

The following titles have been published recently by The Commonwealth of Learning and are available upon request. C.O.L. charges nominal shipping and handling costs on publications orders from institutions in developed and non-Commonwealth countries. Pre-payments or purchase orders are required.

• Directory of Courses and Materials: A Handbook for Educators
  (Fourth Edition, 1995). Revised, and updated in both content and design, this directory describes materials and programmes that have been developed by distance education trainers, working at all levels and sectors of public educational systems throughout the Commonwealth. Pricing and contact information is also included. The listings are organised under six categories: introduction to distance education, management and administration, instructional design, technology in distance education, student support and tutor training, research and evaluation, and full programmes of study. Each category is also divided into two sections: self-instructional materials and face-to-face courses. (64 pages)

• Producing Gender Sensitive Learning Materials: A Handbook for Educators
  Prepared by Janet Jenkins, 1995. This unique resource book is designed to be used by those developing distance learning materials to assist in identifying gender biases and improving capacity for addressing them. Discussion and case studies cover not only course materials, but the manner in which educational issues are approached. For example, course calendars and brochures are examined to find ways in which opportunities for education and training can be “advertised” to all so that it is clear that women are encouraged to take part. The Handbook can be used for self-study purposes, as a guide for administrators in setting policy, or as a resource for workshops in course writing and instructional design. It is available as a bound document or as a camera-ready master suitable for duplication. (86 pages)