

Message to the National Teachers' Institute (NTI)



Presented in absentia on the occasion of the:

2nd Joint National Graduation Ceremony for the Award of the Nigeria Certificate in Education, Advanced Diploma in Education and Postgraduate Diploma in Education, by Open and Distance Education System & Conferment of the Institute's Fellowship and Other Awards

*Kaduna, Nigeria
10 November 2012*

Presentation of Fellow Teachers Institute (FTI)

*by Professor Asha Kanwar
President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning*

It gives me great pleasure to send a message on the occasion of the 2nd National Teachers' Institute (NTI) Summit and Graduation Ceremony. The NTI is the only dedicated single-mode teacher training institute in the Commonwealth which has trained nearly a million teachers since its inception in 1976. With annual enrolments of over 150,000, the NTI is an example of how distance education can expand access, improve quality and cut the costs of training teachers and we often cite it as a model for countries wishing to increase the number of trained teachers to achieve the EFA goals.

So I am absolutely delighted to receive the award of Fellow from this great institution which has made such a sterling contribution to the development of education in Nigeria. I am thankful to the Director General & Chief Executive, Dr. Aminu Ladan Sharehu, for this great honour.

My organisation, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), helps governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using distance education and appropriate technologies. Technologies would include everything from print which is still the mainstay of traditional distance learning, to community media such as radio and TV, as well as mobile and online learning systems. We have the mandate to work in 54 Commonwealth Member States that cover all regions of the globe – from the Caribbean to the Pacific and from Asia to Africa.

COL has been closely associated with the NTI since 2000, when the institute went through a strategic planning exercise to ‘refocus, revitalise and restructure’ and to renew its approach to distance learning. COL supported initiatives in the capacity building of staff that led to an improvement in the quality of course materials and gave NTI a leadership role not just in Nigeria but also among teacher training institutions in Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Uganda. COL has also been instrumental in training staff in audio video and FM production techniques.

The COL-NTI association goes back even further if we consider the fact that Alhaji Hafiz S. Wali, the founding director of NTI, was a member of COL’s Board of Governors and a senior staff member at COL in the nineties. This tradition continues at the present time with Dr. Abdurrahman Umar who represents NTI and Nigeria with great distinction at the Commonwealth of Learning and indeed across the entire Commonwealth in the field of teacher education.

Over the years, NTI has harnessed the potential of various technologies to reach the unreached. From interactive FM radio programmes, to playing an active role in the Teacher Training in sub Saharan Africa (TESSA) consortium, NTI has been a pioneer in adopting appropriate technologies to enrich its curriculum and pedagogic practice. For Africa to achieve Universal Primary Education and EFA goals by 2015, nearly 3 million teachers will be required. It will not be possible to train these numbers through conventional means. Innovative and alternative approaches will be required. Many more NTI’s will be needed across the continent.

COL has been very fortunate to have the consistent support of Nigeria. We are very grateful for the financial and intellectual support provided by the government of Nigeria, who as a major donor, has a seat on our Board of Governors. This is currently occupied by HE Ambassador Mariam Katagum, a great advocate of education and development.

Today, it is an important milestone in the life of NTI as it celebrates both institutional and individual achievement. Let me extend my warm greetings and congratulations to all of you who graduate today. As you set out on the next steps of your journey, I am sure you will proudly recall the value of the opportunities that NTI gave you and how it empowered you for success.