

Developing the Educational Ecosystem of the Maldives: Launch of an Internet Radio System



*Launch of the Internet Radio Facility, Male, Maldives,
3 December 2009*

*Remarks by Sir John Daniel
Commonwealth of Learning*

Transcript

Mr Vice-President, Honourable Ministers, Vice-Chancellors of the Open Universities of Malaysia and Bangladesh, High Commissioners, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour for me to speak today on behalf of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), represented here by my colleagues Dr Ramamurthy Sreedher and Mr Dalip Tetri.

Today we launch an Internet Radio system for the Maldives. Internet Radio combines the strength of the Internet, with its ability to allow people to adapt communications technology to their own needs, with the power of the mass media to reach many people.

I am delighted that COL and CEMCA have been able to help the Maldives put this Internet Radio in place and to salute the important role of the Open University Malaysia in the project. OU Malaysia's President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali and his Deputy, Professor Mansoor Fadzil are here with us. Their presence gives me personal pleasure because I had the privilege of being made an honorary doctor of OU Malaysia last month.

Mr. Vice-President, the annual meeting of the Advisory Council of CEMCA was held here in the Maldives at the Bandos Resort two days ago. I express our sincere thanks to the Maldives for its gracious hospitality and our special gratitude to the Minister of Education, The Honourable Mustafa Lufti, and to State Minister Ahmed Ali Manik for having participated so fully in our work and for hosting to a delightful evening in Male yesterday.

My work at the Commonwealth of Learning has taken me to most of the 54 Commonwealth countries. It is usually important to visit a country in order properly to understand it. This is truer of the Maldives than any other country I know. One must come here to appreciate how nature of the country, as an archipelago

of islands, makes the Maldives a unique combination of population dispersion allied with the very strong sense of local community that comes from living on small islands. I believe that the Internet Radio system is especially appropriate for that combination of dispersion and community.

Already you have made great strides in creating a modern educational ecosystem that brings all elements of education and training together into a seamless whole. I refer to the way that the Educational Resource Centre, the Centre for Open Learning and the Centre for Continuing Education ensure that here in the Maldives schooling, vocational training, teacher education, higher education and community learning add up to a totality that is greater than the sum of the parts.

In this context I am delighted that the Maldives through its focal points, Mr Ahmed Yasir and Dr Ali Fawaz Shareef, play such an important part in the work of the Commonwealth of Learning and in particular in the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

This Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth is playing an increasingly impressive role in bringing together the small states so that their developments in tertiary education also add up to a whole that is greater than the sum of national efforts. Maldives has much to teach the other small island states and a representative from your Maritime Institute is doing that as I speak at a workshop in Samoa on education and training in port management and stevedoring.

Your President and I have just come away from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in held in Port of Spain, Trinidad last week. It was 22 years ago, when the Heads met in Vancouver, that the Commonwealth of Learning was created. At that meeting two decades ago the challenges of climate change and sea-level rise were highlighted for the first time in a Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting by the then President of the Maldives. Your President continued that tradition in Trinidad where the story of your underwater Cabinet meeting received wide coverage. He reminded his fellow Heads of Government that the upcoming meeting in Copenhagen is not really a negotiation between governments but, at a deeper level, a negotiation between humankind and Mother Nature.

Mr Vice-President, Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, coming here has helped me and my colleagues truly to understand the fragility of your beautiful ecosystem. I hope that this Internet Radio will contribute to the further development of your already impressive educational ecosystem, fully equipping it to help the people of the Maldives to continue to prosper whatever the future may bring.