

COL Board of Governor's Reception

Remarks

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11 June 2014

by
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Commonwealth of Learning

Chair, Governors, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues

Thank you for coming and I hope you're enjoying the evening.

As you know, COL is a small but important organisation. Its aim is to help governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using open, distance and technology-enhanced approaches.

COL is a unique organization which has the ability to respond to the needs of a wide range of stakeholders: from the Batwa community in the forests of Uganda, who learn beekeeping using mobiles, to the rural women in Malawi who participate in a health and development programmes through community radio. Our stakeholders include goat herders in India, construction workers in Nauru, rural girls in Pakistan and out of school youth in Jamaica. In addition COL works in policy making and capacity building with ministries and institutions across the Commonwealth. Being relevant to such a diverse constituency and delivering on results is an ongoing challenge that COL has consistently addressed. Today COL is a respected and credible organisation—this is because COL delivers results, is flexible and responsive to the needs of its diverse stakeholders and demonstrates prudence while ensuring value for money. COL has also emerged as a thought leader, offering a paradigm shift in the field of human resource development.

COL's richest resource is its small team of dedicated professionals from around the Commonwealth who have the capacity to develop models and promote innovative uses of technology. We have reached this stage over an existence of two and a half decades where many who have gone before us have made valuable contributions. COL has been very fortunate to have a very eminent board and visionary leaders. They have been genuinely committed to promoting 'learning for development' which has given us an agenda and a purpose that continues to guide our work.

As we know, several Commonwealth countries are not likely to achieve the MDGs or EFA goals by 2015. Even beyond that deadline, poverty eradication will continue to dominate development discourse, along with issues of population growth and climate change. COL is supporting

countries by focusing on girl's education, skills development and the use of OER. While it is important to support the countries off track to achieve the MDG's, it is also critical to position COL for the post-MDG world. COL will contribute by promoting the use of technologies for both formal and non-formal education and training for human resource development.

The theme for the Commonwealth this year is 'Team Commonwealth'. This celebrates the spirit of friendship among diverse people and encourages the sharing of our common goals and values. By working together, Team Commonwealth can create just and peaceful societies with sustainable and inclusive social progress for both men and women. The Board members, COL staff and our partners represent Team Commonwealth who share the same values. Together we can promote learning that leads to development for all. We don't have the luxury of time and there is a need for impatience. What we need now is 'skills, scale and speed' the formula recently proposed by the new Indian Prime Minister, the Hon Narendra Modi, to forge ahead in achieving our goals.

Thank you for your continued support.