COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA, NEW DELHI

Minutes of the Tenth Meeting of the CEMCA Advisory Council held at 10:00 A.M on Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at New Delhi, India.

The following were present:

The Hon'ble Burchell Whiteman, O J, Chairman, Board of Governors, COL	Presided
Prof. Asha Kanwar, Vice President, COL	Dy. Chairperson
Dr. Upali Sedere Director General, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka	Member
Professor Dr. Nazir Ahmed Sangi Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan	Member
Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS, India	Member
Professor Dr. Zarida Hambali Director of Academic, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia	Member
Dr. Daniel Tan Tiong Hok Director, Centre for Educational Development, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore	Member
Mr. B.S. Bhatia Former Director, DECU, ISRO, Ahmedabad, India	Member
Dr. R. Sreedher, Director, CEMCA	Member
Mr. Dalip Kumar Tetri, Head, Admn. & Finance, CEMCA	Secretary

Prof. Rajasekharan Pillai, VC, IGNOU, Mr. Amit Khare, Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, members could not attend the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Asha Kanwar, Vice President, COL extended greetings to all members on behalf of Sir John, President & CEO, COL who could not chair the meeting being in Seychelles to attend the opening of their first University. She formally introduced the Hon'ble Burchell Whiteman, O

J, Chairman, Board of Governors, COL to the members and expressed her deep gratitude to the chairman for accepting request to come to Delhi from Cochin where PCF6 was held. She requested him to preside over the meeting.

The Hon'ble Burchell Whiteman O J, accepted the request and greeted all the members and requested them to introduce themselves formally.

After the formal introduction of the members, Prof. Asha Kanwar briefed the members on the establishment of COL and CEMCA and the role expected to be played by the both. She complemented the excellent performance of the CEMCA team for the fourth successive year and for its achievements in securing additional funding, almost to the tune of 80 % of the programme budget, for conducting the programmes sponsored by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India, the Government of Maldives and International agencies such as, UNESCO. She informed the members that COL operates on a cycle of a Three Year Plan approved in the triennial meeting of the Commonwealth Education Ministers. CEMCA, which earlier concentrated its main operations in India, extended its reach to other countries of the Commonwealth Asian region such as, Bangladesh, Maldives, Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. CEMCA could not operate in Pakistan due to the prevailing political situation and its efforts to extend operations in Brunei Darussalam have not been successful. However, the performance in other countries has been excellent with definite outcomes achieved.

She said CEMCA has now three major targets before it for the next year as mentioned below:

(i)   Step up activities in Pakistan, Singapore and Brunei
(ii)   Ensure that some innovative programmes such as Quality Assurance in Multimedia Learning and *EasyNow* are used by more institutions and visible proof of use be obtained and recorded
(iii)   Extend the network of I Radio to ten institutions before December 2011

Initiating the discussion, the Chair informed that voluntary contributions to COL by the member states have been stable and continuously increasing year after year as COL has been responding to the needs of the countries. The achievement has been possible due to the incessant and vigorous efforts by the leadership and staff of COL. The Chair added that CEMCA, with a small component of 7 staff members, has been successful in meeting challenges and delivering results and making its presence felt in the Commonwealth Asian region.
Thereafter, the agenda items were taken up for discussion as follows:

Item No. 1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ninth meeting held on December 01, 2009

The minutes of the Ninth meeting were confirmed as no comments were received from the members.

Item No. 2. Action taken on the decisions in the Ninth meeting

Dr. Sreedher presented the Action Taken Report and informed as under:

(i)   Release of final version of *EduFrame*
The Final version of *EduFrame* was released in May 2010. The *EduFrame* was tested by Grade III students in the Maldives. The major findings of the limited study was that proper compatible content must be prepared for a comprehensive study on use of ICT by the primary school children and by teachers. While the hardware had some glitches such as, power supply unit and lack of identifiable technical support in the Maldives, the students felt happy to own a computer. Teachers were interested in

making their own user friendly patterns than the ones which were envisaged by the team. The report of the experiment was presented at PCF6 by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Education, H. E. Dr. Ahmad Ali Manik, Government of Maldives.

(ii) To operationalise *EasyNow*
40 persons from the University of Malaya attended the *EasyNow* workshop held on December 10, 2010.

(iii) To conduct 10 State level consultations on Community Radio
The target of conducting 10 State level consultations has already been achieved and 4 more consultations will be conducted by December end 2010.

(iv) To support two Open Schools to create Self learning Materials, and their conversion into Multimedia
The Assam State Open School is in the process of finalizing their course material in Education and the revision of their Assamese Language & Literature material.

(v) To take CR and I Radio initiatives to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
The I Radio in the Maldives established with the active help and guidance of CEMCA, is operating for 18 hours a day. The I Radio established at the Wawason Open University, Penang, Malaysia with active support from CEMCA has converted I Radio to I Video.   I Radio activity was initiated in Kandy, Sri Lanka and I Radio was also set up in CIET, India. Capacity building workshop for Community Radio License holders is scheduled for December 2010 for Bangladesh.

(vi) To support IGNOU upgrade its 'Certificate Course in Community Radio' to a 'Post Graduate Diploma Course in Community Media'.
An MOU has been signed with IGNOU to upgrade its 'Certificate Course in Community Radio' to a 'Post Graduate Diploma Course in Community Media' and further action is being initiated.

(vii) & (viii) To test the quality of e-Material and recognition of standards in QAMLM by various countries.
QAMLM guidelines were tested by 24 institutions in India coordinated by the Consortium for Educational Communication/ University Grants Commission, (CEC/UGC) and the Central Institute of Educational Technology/ National Council of Educational Research and Technology (CIET/NCERT). All 7 State Institute of Educational Technology (SIETs) in the education sector in India have adopted QAMLM. However, no headway could be made with Malaysia for the recognition of standards in QAMLM.

It has been decided to defer further action on recognition of standards.

(ix) To take measures for voluntary adoption of QAMLM version 1.0 by higher education institutions and for school education.

QAMLM guidelines are to be customised and adapted to suit specific requirements of CEC and CIET for voluntary adoption of QAMLM version 1.0

(x) Recording of eminent personalities

Only two personalities have agreed to do the recording so far.

(xi) CEMCA Awards for the Best ODL Student

CEMCA Awards for the Best ODL Student in Information and Communication Technologies or Electronic Media and Mass Communication Studies were presented to the best ODL Student of the Open University, Malaysia (OUM, Malaysia), and the Open University, Sri Lanka (OUSL, Sri Lanka) and in India to the student of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU - New Delhi), Dr B R Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, (Dr. B R A O U- Hyderabad), the Karnataka State Open University (KSOU-Mysore) and the Netaji Subash Open University (NSOU-Kolkata). It is proposed to continue the Award to the existing institutions and will be extended to other institutions such as Wawasan Open University, (WOU – Malaysia), Bangladesh Open University, (BOU-Bangladesh), Allama Iqbal Open University, (AIOU-Pakistan) and the Maldivian College of Higher Education, (MCHE, Maldives) when these institutions launch the relevant programmes.

(xii) **Scholarships offered for the "Certificate Programme in Community Radio**" Scholarships offered to IGNOU learners enrolled for the "Certificate Programme in Community Radio" were extended to 62 students. The scheme will be continued and subjected to review from time to time to ensure relevancy and viability.

The Chair thanked Dr. Sreedher for the positive report and invited comments from the members thereon.

Mr. Bhatia referring to the cost component of *EduFrame* mentioned that the cost also depended on the volume of the items to be procured. He indicated that the economy of scales has an impact on the cost and with higher numbers the cost tends to come down. As such, it may be possible to bring down the cost of *EduFrame* from US$ 75, if higher numbers are procured.

Prof. Sangi mentioned that with the increased introduction of technology in ODL, 30,000 Part Time teachers are required to be trained in IT in Pakistan for which low cost computers are required. 2,000 training centres have to be equipped with low cost computers. They are in the process of acquiring 10 sets of Video Conferencing system. He sought the help of Dr. Sreedher in enhancing the specifications of *EduFrame*. Dr. Sreedher informed that the Virtual University of Pakistan has also shown an interest in the *EduFrame*. Prof. Sangi however, added that with the recent floods in Pakistan, the funding for multimedia institutions has been slightly deferred.

Dr. Jena stated that though technology was already available, it was more of a challenge to use it effectively for enhancing learning on a mass scale. His concern was largely related to monetary/ financial investment vis a vis facilitating learning. He suggested that a minor project be undertaken to explore the use and benefits of using technology to enhance learning. He also pointed out that financial support for this activity in Higher Education and School Education, for which project reports are to be submitted, are readily available with the Government of India. He also indicated that the impact could be studied and measured only through such a study.

Dr. Sedere stated that internet charges in Sri Lanka have come down by 50%. He also informed the members that 30,000 teachers are already working in the ODL mode and additional 3,000 are being added. The President of Sri Lanka exhorted educational institutions to use technology for enhancing learning. Therefore, Dr Sedere felt that there was a need to demonstrate as to how these technologies can be used effectively to enhance learning.

Prof. Asha Kanwar intervening in the discussion informed that COL, being a non–commercial organisation, is not in the business of marketing the product. The objective of COL was to demonstrate that cost barrier for laptops can be broken down and brought to a much lower level in comparison to the

current market rates. The objective has been achieved with the demonstration and its specifications are available to all. Any interested party could utilize the specifications to suit their own requirements. The key question, she pointed out was to measure the effectiveness of the *EduFrame* as teaching/ learning tool. She also hinted that even classroom pedagogy has changed and that it is the student who matters the most.

Dr. Jena mentioned that there was a 50% dropout at the school level and about 40 million students looked for alternative modes of education/ learning. He also indicated that more than 1.2 million students need to be in schools, which are not equipped to handle such large numbers. CEMCA should move more aggressively to enhance capacity building in the area of Open Schooling as achieving the MDGs still looks distant. Multi Media Quality Assurance Tool Kits need to be documented and people at the lower level need to be involved in the use of these tools.

Dr. Sedere mentioned that 30 people trained in *EasyNow* at a workshop held by CEMCA, made very good progress in the use of *EasyNow*. He also indicated that much progress has not been made to be able to utilise it fully in the classroom context. He mentioned that Singapore and Malaysia could help to translate the material in local languages otherwise the changeover would be difficult. The main challenge, he said, was in using it in the class room context. He also felt that merely training a few individuals was not going to help to take the initiative forward.

Prof. Sangi sharing Dr Sedere's views stated that tools such as *EasyNow* have to be seen as a model for the participating country and it should be treated as a project with a project leader enabling the transaction.

Mr. Bhatia opined that it was the right time to conduct a minor study to examine the effectiveness of the EasyNow package in the classroom context and to study the bottlenecks and other factors inhibiting its use.

Coming to the use of Community Radio, Dr. Sreedher stated that 1000 persons participated in Regional consultations for CR awareness out of which 700 applied for CR licences. However, the licensing procedure is still cumbersome. CEMCA has initiated a longitudinal study on these awareness programmes. The study is being conducted by Prof. V. Venkaiah and is designed to measure the impact of these awareness consultations. Mr. Bhatia stated that the Community Radio was a very good tool for both the University as well as the School and there was a need to take I Radio forward. Dr. Jena also supported the promotion of the I Radio for Open and Distance Education at both the University and School levels.

Dr. Jena stated that CEMCA's work with the Assam State Open School was a good beginning but that Assam was a small state and would not be able to meet the challenges of school education. He indicated that capacity building exercises should be initiated in other bigger Open Schools as well. He thanked COL for the feasibility report for capacity building in Open Schools, which has been approved by the NIOS Governing body.

Dr. Sreedher presented the Director's report through slides during which, Programme Officers, Ms. Rukmini Venmraju and Dr. Pema Eden Samdup also made brief presentations.
Dr. Sreedher informed the members that CEMCA proposes to establish 10 more I Radios in the next year. Commenting on less in-take in the IGNOU 'Certificate Course in Community Radio' Mr. Bhatia mentioned that there were many communication schools in the country and suggested that the CR programme be introduced as an optional subject so as to reach a large number of students. Commenting on the Quality Assurance guidelines, Mr. Bhatia stated that the QAMLM Version 1.0 has been prepared very professionally. He indicated that the guidelines need to be executed. He mentioned that Malaysia,

which was an active partner in development of the guidelines, could take the initiative to implement this in Malaysia. In India, he pointed out, the CIET need to be more involved and more private partners should be taken in for content creation. He said that Quality Assurance was relevant not only to the Asian countries but was the need of the day even in developed countries as well. COL may consider involving New Zealand, Canada and some other countries in the initiative and the QAMLM Guidelines could become more acceptable in other countries. Prof. Asha Kanwar stated that resistance from the Head of the Institutions has been one of the main factors for its slow acceptance. She opined that qualification authorities such as the Distance Education Council (DEC) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India could take the initiative to implement the guidelines.

Prof. Sangi stated that Pakistan started planning and developing elearning and Multi Media courses in 2003 and the results of implementation were encouraging. He therefore, suggested the use of Mobile phones, the Internet and Television for learning for which quality standards need to be developed. Dr. Zarida stated that mobiles are now being widely used for learning in Malaysia and the experience of different member states could be shared to initiate action and to take the agenda forward. Students are indeed interested in using gadgets. Prof. Asha Kanwar mentioned that live demonstration of LMS and use of Mobile phones with the rural communities in local languages will be very useful in disseminating knowledge. The Chairman informed that a lot of material is already available on the subject on the web and COL/CEMCA can help in the matter.

The Chair commended the efforts of CEMCA for the recordings on 'Respect and Understanding' and saw the potential for its use as these commonalities are world over. Dr. Sedere stated that there are 30,000 teachers in colleges in Sri Lanka but that there was no database available to electronically manage them. He wondered whether a system on open source could be made available in order to track and manage both teachers and students, which would be of tremendous help to Sri Lanka. Prof. Sangi mentioned that Pakistan, had an LMS and a Library for material management and could provide manpower for the project. Dr. Sedere stated that the University departments controlled data relating to student records in Sri Lanka. He also pointed out that the data is then given to Data Processing Manager who looks after admission and examination data. He indicated that they face problems in the co-ordination and sharing of data and bandwidth.

Commenting on the Director's Report, the Chair once again extended congratulations to the CEMCA team for their tangible accomplishments. Dr. Sangi stated that he would like to collaborate in a much larger way with CEMCA and would like to adopt courses and work on I Radio. He also indicated that he would like a core group to be constituted so as to work jointly in different areas. The Chair mentioned that CEMCA and AIOU need to be involved for furthering the programmes. Dr. Jena too congratulated Dr. Sreedher and team for achieving such results. He stated that resources relevant to India should be developed and similar action should be initiated for other countries as well. He said that though CEMCA's main focus was on media, efforts should also lead towards school education. For instance, in Assam about 70% teachers are untrained and about 80% are under qualified. He suggested that sound courses on education, teacher education and training packages should be developed under the aegis of CEMCA and that CEMCA could offer valuable advice and guidance in the development of material and training packages.

Dr. Sedere also congratulated the CEMCA team and informed of the popularity of CEMCA in Sri Lanka because of the work being done there. He informed that though most teachers are trained in Sri Lanka, the students are more smart and hence, more demanding. Therefore, the scope of training for teachers has

changed. He indicated that UNESCO had distributed computers in Sri Lanka and 80 teachers are currently working to convert material to e content. He indicated that the focus for CEMCA should now be more on anticipating new things as CEMCA is in a position to foresee things before others and is in a position to extend technical assistance.

Mr. Bhatia, while congratulating the CEMCA team, expressed the need for more effective networking and involvement. He proposed that the project QAMLM be taken by the members to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore and testing done at the institutional level. He also suggested that it be followed up with the DEC in India. The Chair added that he was impressed by the QAMLM guidelines.

Prof. Asha Kanwar suggested that the success stories of CEMCA be documented and the partners approached with solid proof. She pointed out that Technology was the path to take to tackle emerging problems of great magnitude. The example of the Khan Academy in the US was quoted by the Chair for using inexpensive low level technology to achieve results.

The Chair in his closing remarks wished CEMCA, "still better off in the next year".

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Action items

	Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, New Delhi		
	Action list on the decisions taken in 10th meeting of CEMCA Advisory Council held on November 30, 2010 at New Delhi		
Item No.	Action item	Time line	Responsibility
1.	Request to help AIOU enhance the specifications of *EduFrame*	To be finalised in consultation with Prof. Sangi, VC, AIOU	Dr. Sreedher
2.	Multi Media Quality Assurance Tool Kits need to be documented and people at the lower level involved in use of these tools.	December, 2011	Ms. Rukmini
3.	To conduct 4 more State level Consultations on Community Radio Awareness.	December, 2010	Dr. Sreedher
4.	Capacity building exercises to be initiated with bigger open schools to achieve better results	December, 2011	Dr. Pema E Samdup
5.	*EasyNow* to go as a model to the participating countries as a project and the project leader enabling the project.	December, 2010	Dr. Sreedher
6.	Singapore and Malaysia to help translate *EasyNow* material to local languages for Sri Lanka so that the utilisation may improve.	December, 2011	Dr. Sreedher/ Dr Pema Eden Samdup
7.	To conduct a minor study to find out why the people are not able to use *EasyNow* identifying the bottlenecks and the factors inhibiting use for taking remedial measures.	January 2012	Dr. Sreedher
8.	To support IGNOU to upgrade its 'Certificate Course in Community Radio' to a 'Post Graduate Diploma Course in Community Media'.	December, 2011	Dr. Pema Eden Samdup
9.	Malaysia to be approached to implement the Quality Assurance guidelines. In India, CIET to involve more private partners for content creation COL may consider involving New Zealand, Canada and some other countries in the initiative. The Distance Education Council (DEC) and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India to be approached to take the initiative to implement the guidelines.	December, 2011	Ms. Rukmini and Dr. Sreedher
10.	AIOU to collaborate with CEMCA and to adopt courses and work on I Radio and like a core group to be constituted to work jointly in different areas.	November, 2011	Dr. Sreedher / Dr Pema Eden Samdup
11.	Extension of CEMCA Awards for the Best ODL Student in Information and Communication Technologies or Electronic Media and Mass	December, 2011	Mr. Dalip/HAF

	Communication Studies to 10 more institutions in the region.		
12.	150 Scholarships offered for the "Certificate Programme in Community Radio" launched by the IGNOU.	July,2011	Mr. Dalip/HAF