

CEMCA

Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Advisory Council of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, held in the Conference Room, CEMCA Office at 52, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 062, on Thursday, January 25, 2001 commenced at 1600 hours.

The following members were present:

1.	Prof. V.S. Prasad, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU	..	..	Chairman
2.	Dato Prof. G. Dhanarajan, President & CEO, The COL	..	..	Representing The COL
3.	Prof. Dr. M.A. Wahab Mian, Dean, School of Education, Bangladesh Open University	..	..	Member
4.	Dr. Javed Mahmood Kasuri, Director, Educational Technology, Allama Iqbal Open University	..	..	Member
5.	Mr. Vijay Menon, Secretary General, AMIC	..	..	Member
6.	Dr. Buddhi Weerasinghe, Director, Educational Technology, The Open University of Sri Lanka	..	..	Member
7.	Mr. Champak Chatterji, Jt. Secretary, Dept. of Education Government of India	..	..	Member
8.	Mr. Kiran Karnik, Chief Executive Officer, Discovery Communications	..	..	Member
9.	Dr. Usha Vyasulu Reddi, Director, CEMCA	..	..	Member
	Mr. K. Narayanan, Head, Administration & Finance attended as	..	..	Secretary

The Chairman while extending a warm welcome to the Members, thanked the President, The COL, for locating CEMCA in India and appreciated CEMCA's work in training in Media, the contribution of Dr. Usha V. Reddi, Director and the staff of the CEMCA in this behalf.

The following matters were considered.

ITEM No. 1: CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL HELD ON DECEMBER 1, 1999.

3.1.1. The minutes of the second meeting of the Advisory Council held on December 1, 1999 were confirmed as a correct record.

ITEM No. 2 ACTION TAKEN REPORT

3.2.1. The report of action taken on the minutes of the meeting held on December 1, 1999 was noted.

ITEM No. 3: ANNUAL REPORT OF CEMCA FOR THE PERIOD 1999-2000

3.3.1. The report of the activities of CEMCA for the period 1999-2000 as contained in the agenda note with the Director, CEMCA, highlighting the major activities was noted.

3.3.2. While considering the annual report, the Advisory Council—

3.3.3. Noted the suggestion that CEMCA may consider developing a Manual for organising and running Workshops in the area of use of electronic media in distance education.

3.3.4. Noted the observation that a study of the impact of the workshops conducted by CEMCA be done. It was noted that at the conclusion of every training workshop a feed back was obtained from the participants on the usefulness of the workshop. As CEMCA was still in its initial years of operation, it was felt to be premature to undertake detailed impact studies.

3.3.5. Noted the suggestion that CEMCA, in addition to the training programmes conducted within India, should also cater to larger sections of the personnel in distance education institutions in the region, by doing training programmes abroad in each of the countries.

3.3.6. Noted the suggestion that in view of the demand for training in the region being high, CEMCA should collaborate with other organisations in the region.

3.3.7. Noted the need for CEMCA to assess the critical mass of resources, needed for its operations both at present and in the future. This would largely depend on the future directions in which CEMCA's activities would grow and as far as possible, the future activities may be addressed by outsourcing the work or by engaging short term consultants with experience.

The Council endorsed the comment of Prof. Dharmarajan complimenting the Director and the staff of CEMCA on the creative way in which the operations of CEMCA were structured which had the effect of developing capacity in training. CEMCA should enhance its activities outside of India in the region where there is need as in countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. However, in respect of activities in Pakistan, it was noted that no new initiatives are to be taken till such time the position of Pakistan as a member of the Commonwealth is resolved.

ITEM No. 4: CEMCA MISSION STATEMENT AND FUTURE ROLE AND DIRECTION

3.4.1. The Council noted the mission statement of CEMCA, as given below and endorsed the same.

3.4.2. Mission Statement of CEMCA

“In consonance with the mission of The Commonwealth of Learning, The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, promotes the meaningful, relevant, and appropriate use of information and communication technologies to serve the educational and training needs of Commonwealth member states in Asia.”

3.4.3. The Advisory Council considered the future role of CEMCA, evolving into COL's branch / regional office in Asia, and opined that CEMCA should retain its primary focus on the use of ICTs in open and distance learning and training, as the need for a specialised agency like CEMCA in the region was great, particularly with the universalisation of elementary education and expanding vocational education and training, which load cannot be handled by formal institutions.

3.4.4. While noting the contributions of CEMCA in capacity building, a query was raised if CEMCA as an international agency could play a role in negotiating with the owners of educational media resources on copyright agreements for sharing on an international basis as access to resources is part of training and capacity building. The Council noted that with the increasing consciousness of intellectual property rights, there was danger in an international agency like CEMCA acting as a third party in trying to obtain access to educational resources. The Council also noted that the focus of activities identified and acted upon by CEMCA is within the overall COL directives and CEMCA should build up a large network to provide access to educational resources. CEMCA's present activities were sharply focussed and it was filling a critical need in the region and should continue. This was noted.

3.4.5. The question of whether the use of ICTs in education and training was significantly contributing to the learning process and whether there was any evidence to this effect by way of field studies was considered. It was noted that the information as above would be useful to Heads of Institutions or those managing distance education and CEMCA should collect and disseminate the information to those who need it.

3.4.6. The Advisory Council considered the paper titled, "Into the 21st Century: A vision, a mission and a future: The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia", which had been circulated to the members earlier. In view of the Information and Communication Technologies extending the reach of the open and distance education and its extensive use and advocacy by the COL in its programmes, the past performance of CEMCA in the training programmes conducted in the use of ICTs in the Distance Education, the development of media resources management software, and other related work, and CEMCA's potential being in sharing regional experiences, enabling regional collaborations and partnerships as well as seeking regional solutions in an Asian way, the Advisory Council endorsed the future role of CEMCA in continuing the use of ICTs in open and distance education and training and supporting COLs initiatives and activities in the region. The Advisory Council noted that specifically, this would imply that to ensure that all potential educational technologies are exploited in the most appropriate and cost effective ways possible for the purposes of education and training, CEMCA would

- * Firstly, become a centre for helping Asian countries to capitalise on the expertise that resides in the area;
- * Secondly, become a centre that helps train countries capitalise on the expertise available elsewhere in the Commonwealth;
- * Thirdly, while retaining its technology focus, CEMCA would broaden its activities to cover the full range—such as student support systems, curriculum development materials development, evaluation, etc.

In addition, CEMCA would be a collaborator / executor of COL projects and initiatives that would otherwise not fall directly within CEMCA's focus on technology.

ITEM No. 5: CEMCA PROGRAMME FOR THE PERIOD 2000-2003

3.5.1. The Director, CEMCA, explained the details of the proposal contained in the agenda note, dovetailing its activities into the thrust areas of the COL, and focussing its activities as a catalyst for collaborative action, as a capacity builder and as an information and knowledge

programme areas emanating from the Advisory Council meetings and monthly review meetings of the COL. The Council endorsed the programme for CEMCA's activities for the period 2000-2003 (July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2003) as above.

ITEM No. 6: PLAN OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 2000-2001

3.6.1. The Advisory Council considered the plan of activities for the year 2000-2001 as contained in the agenda note and approved the same. The remarks of a member that consultancies are to be pursued and the location of the training programmes be specified for budgetary purposes was noted.

ITEM N.7: PROPOSALS FOR OUTREACH INTO THE REGION i.e. IN-COUNTRY AND REGIONAL PROGRAMME

3.7.1. The Council noted the proposals for programmes in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in 2000-2001 as outreach programmes. It was noted that in the programmes conducted by CEMCA there was no ban for participants from Pakistan attending, and that expertise available locally in the respective countries be utilised wherever appropriate.

ITEM No. 8: BUDGET AND THE STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

3.8.1. The Secretary of the Council highlighted the budget estimates for the year 2000-2001 the shortfall in funding and the consequent reduction in its activities and the Income and Expenditure Statement for the year 1999-2000. The Council while endorsing the budget for 2000-2001 noted the statement of the President, COL, that the fund allocation to CEMCA made earlier was based on COL's own funding and will be reviewed in February 2001, when COL staff will be reviewing their programmes and additional funding was possible.

3.8.2. While thanking IGNOU for being a generous host of CEMCA and partner of COL in its programmes and the member of the Advisory Council for their expertise, the President, COL, reiterated that CEMCA will not be a COL in the region, but will pursue its goals in the area of its expertise and contribute to the Commonwealth in the area of education. He also affirmed that CEMCA's needs will be given high priority and that CEMCA's budget would be integrated into the COL's overall budget.

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

Sd/-

V.S. PRASAD
Chairman