

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA, HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF CEMCA OFFICE AT 52, TUGHLAKABAD INSTITUTIONAL AREA, NEW DELHI 110062 ON FRIDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2001 AT 1100 HOURS.

The following members were present:-

Prof. H P Dikshit, Vice-Chancellor, IGNOU	-	Chairman
Dato' Prof. G. Dhanarajan, President & CEO, The COL		Special invitee
Mr. Brian Long, Vice-President, The COL	-	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Vijay Menon, Secretary-General, AMIC	-	Member
Dr. Mrs. W A Rupa Wijeratne, Director, Educational Technology, OUSL, Sri Lanka	-	Member
Dr. Usha Vyasulu Reddi, Director, CEMCA	-	Member
Ms Doris McEachern, Manager, Finance & Admn, The COL	-	By Special invitation
Mr. David Walker, Educational Specialist, The COL-	- do -	
Mr. K. Narayanan, Head, Admn & Finance, CEMCA		attended as Secretary to the Advisory Council.

Leave of absence was granted to Mr. Champak Chatterji, Joint Secretary to the Government of India and to Mr. Kiran Karnik, President, NASSCOM, Members.

The following matters were considered:-

A warm welcome was extended to Prof. H P Dikshit, VC, IGNOU, the new Chairman and to Dr. Mrs. W A Rupa Wijeratne, Director, Educational Technology, OUSL, Sri Lanka, the new member of the Advisory Council. The Chairman welcomed Prof. G. Dhanarajan, President and CEO, The COL and Ms Doris McEachern and Mr. David Walker, COL staff members present.

Prof. Dhanarajan reiterated that the Board of Governors of the COL did not see COL as a decentralised organisation, as there was a need to conserve its resources and use it for its education and training programmes rather than on staff and offices in different parts of the world. He added that CEMCA will continue as a major project of COL and continue doing valuable work as it is now constituted, keeping within the programme of its mandated activities.

Dr. Mrs. Rupa Wijeratne, while commending the proactive role of CEMCA, thanked CEMCA for its initiatives which had helped her institution, The OUSL, Sri Lanka in their staff being trained in the production of multimedia materials for distance education. It was gratifying to note that the staff who were trained by CEMCA had, in turn, imparted training to their colleagues in the University.

ITEM No. 1 : CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL HELD ON JANUARY 25, 2001.

- 4.1.1 The minutes of the third meeting of the Advisory Council held on January 25, 2001 were confirmed subject to the following correction:-
- 4.1.2 In para 3.4.6 of the minutes, against the second bullet, the words "Secondly, become a centre that helps train countries capitalise or the expertise available elsewhere in the Commonwealth" be deleted and in its place the following be substituted:-
"Secondly, becomes a centre that helps train countries to capitalise on the expertise available elsewhere in the Commonwealth."

ITEM No. 2 : ACTION TAKEN REPORT

- 4.2.1 The report on action taken on the minutes of the last meeting of the Advisory Council was noted with the Director highlighting some of the points.
- 4.2.2 The Council noted that CEMCA had made a beginning in urging partnering institutions to provide resources, in kind, however modest, in its training programmes and also had made a beginning in conducting training programmes outside India in the region.
- 4.2.3 Prof. Dikshit expressed the view that the Vice-Chancellors of the Open and Distance Learning institutions should be approached by CEMCA for sharing their experience and expertise as local involvement would be beneficial to CEMCA in its operations. He felt that the software for such training could be developed by CEMCA in collaboration with institutions in the region.

- 4.2.4 Mr. Long, Vice-Chairman, enquired as to how the study to be made by CEMCA in the use of ICTs in education was significantly contributing to the learning process (cf 3.4.5 of the minutes of the third Advisory Council meeting) would be used by the open and distance learning institutions. He expressed the view that it would be useful to know the reasons why in some cases projects fail, as such an analysis would help in successful implementation of projects in the future. This was noted.
- 4.2.5 The Council also noted that in some cases the dates for programmes indicated earlier, viz in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, could not be adhered to on account of local conditions in the region and that CEMCA would follow COL's objectives in its activities in thrust areas.

ITEM No. 3 : ANNUAL REPORT OF CEMCA FOR THE PERIOD 2000-2001

- 4.3.1 The Council noted the progress made by CEMCA in the year 2000-2001 as contained in the report.
- 4.3.2 While considering the report, the Council noted the remarks of the Chairman that the AVRCs/EMRCs in conventional universities are not being utilised to the optimum, which the UGC is seized of for corrective action and felt that CEMCA should associate with institutions having expertise in its work, be it training programmes or other projects.
- 4.3.3 Prof. Dhanarajan expressed the view that CEMCA should work out an arrangement with the AVRCs/EMRCs for doing training programmes and use their facilities in an optimum manner. He emphasised that CEMCA's efforts should be directed to build up capacity of people to work in the system rather than build up centres. This was noted.
- 4.3.4 The Council noted that the UNESCO funded project of creating an on line Legal Database in the Public Domain, which CEMCA had executed successfully, with the assistance of AMIC and the Bar Council of India, needed to be carried forward and that CEMCA was exploring the possibility of entrusting the project to the Bangalore based National Law School University of India as it did not have the resources in house to update and maintain the site. The Chairman offered to host the site on IGNOU's own portal, with the help of the former Director of the NLSUI who was a member of the Board of Management of IGNOU. While this will have to be done in consultation with UNESCO, CEMCA should keep in mind an arrangement, whereby, if the work is not done by the organisation to which it is entrusted, CEMCA should get it back for updation and running.

K. S. Chohan

- 4.3.5 The Council appreciated and placed on record the good work done by Mr. K. Narayanan, Head, Admn. & Finance in the maintenance of accounts manually and strongly advocated automation of accounts, commencing from January 1, 2002. The Council complimented the Director on CEMCA's progress and achievements in the past year and placed on record its appreciation of the good work done by the Director in CEMCA achieving its objectives.
- 4.3.6 The Council also expressed its appreciation of IGNOU hosting CEMCA and thanked Prof H P Dikshit for continuing the tradition of chairing the Advisory council meetings.

ITEM No.4 : PLAN OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD 2001-2002

- 4.4.1 The Council noted the plan of activities for the year 2001-2002 as set out in the agenda note.
- 4.4.2 While considering the plan of activities the following suggestions were made for consideration by CEMCA:-
- 4.4.3 The 10-day Workshop on Developing Multimedia courseware for Distance Education to be done in Bangladesh may be held in Kolkata—a venue with good resources and infrastructure—as it was easy for Bangladesh participants to come to Kolkata for the training.
- 4.4.4 The proposed Workshop on On Line learning is to be done in collaboration with IIT, Bangalore and is to be finalised after discussions with the Director, IIT, Bangalore.
- 4.4.5 CEMCA's website was now being maintained in-house by Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Programme Officer.
- 4.4.6 CEMCA should submit a project proposal for the next financial year for collection of data on the impact of ODL in improving education. The possibility of constituting a small group drawn from the ODL institutions may be considered.
- 4.4.7 CEMCA, may in the future, keep in mind the choice of subjects or areas for projects which are not on the wane, as in the case of aquaculture, where the Chairman stated that in many universities the Departments of Aquaculture were being closed down.

ITEM No. 5 : OUTREACH INTO THE REGION—IN COUNTRY AND REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

- 4.5.1 The proposals for outreach programmes as contained in the agenda paper were noted.

- 4.5.2 Prof. Dhanarajan emphasised the need for CEMCA to cater to the requirements of sectors in education other than the tertiary sector, and as an example referred to the concept of smart schools being started in the region and of the need to ensure teacher preparedness and curriculum development for such schools. CEMCA's activities should also encompass Education for All. This was noted.
- 4.5.3 The Council also noted the observation of Mr Vijay Menon, Member that the National Institute of Education in Singapore had done good work in the region in the area of school education and could be considered for partnering CEMCA in its activities in this sector.

ITEM No. 6 : BUDGET FOR 2001-2001

- 4.6.1 The Advisory Council noted the budget proposals as contained in the agenda note.
- 4.6.2 A concern was expressed that the falling value of the Canadian Dollar may cause gaps in budget funding. The council noted Mr. Long's observation that the quarterly review of the budget at COL would address this issue. CEMCA could also bring up proposals at the monthly review meetings.

OTHER MATTERS WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

The Chairman proposed that the Advisory Council should meet at least twice in a year. Prof. Dhanarajan felt that it may not always be possible for COL staff to personally participate in the meetings if held more than once, though the possibility of conducting a meeting through audio conference could be considered. Alternatively, any COL staff member present here could participate in the meeting if absolutely essential..

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

(Prof. H.P. Dikshit)
Chairman