

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Advisory Council of the Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia, New Delhi held on November 08, 2004 in Board Room of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068

The following were present: -

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| Prof. H.P. Dikshit, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU | Chairman |
| Sir John Daniel, President and CEO, COL | Vice-Chairman |
| Dr. Ramli Bin Mohamed, Dean/Professor, Institute of Graduate Studies, University Sains Malaysia | Member |
| Dr. Gayathri Jayatillake, Acting Director, Education Technology Division, Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka | Member |
| Mr. K. Narayanan, Retd. Head, Admn & Finance, CEMCA | Member |
| Dr. Usha Vyasulu Reddi, Director, CEMCA | Member |
| Mr. Dalip Kumar Tetri, Head, Admn. & Finance, CEMCA | Secretary |

Mr. Sunil Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and Mr. Kiran Karnik, President, NASSCOM, members could not attend.

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Sir John Daniel, the new President and CEO of COL and to the members of the Advisory Council. He placed on record his deep appreciation of the contribution made by Prof. G. Dhanarajan, the former President & CEO of COL and other members of the council.

The following were considered: -

Item No. 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the Fifth meeting of the Advisory Council held on May 12, 2003.

6.1.1: The minutes were confirmed subject to re-wording of the decisions outlined in items 5.3.9 and 5.3.10, which has been done. A copy of the Revised minutes is enclosed.

Item No. 2: Action taken report

6.2.1: The action taken on the decisions of the Council arrived at in previous meetings was explained to the members. The Chair emphasized the need of more pro-active measures in the region where the demand in certain areas is still high but initiatives are yet to match. He also emphasized that good course material of Open universities can be offered to the interested institutions in the region for which efforts need to be made. Director, CEMCA explained the measures being taken highlighting that COL has identified half a dozen areas of Research where people are encouraged to submit research proposals in Material development, Training and Research & Evaluation.

Item No. 3: Annual Reports for the years 2002-2003 and 2003-04

6.3.1: The Director, CEMCA, briefly explained the activities of CEMCA for the years 2002-2003 and 2003-04 as detailed in the agenda note. The workshops and Training programs organized, Conferences and Symposia participated/represented by CEMCA, Publications brought out, Projects executed, Research activities undertaken and the contribution by partnering organizations specifically the valuable and consistent support provided by IGNOU, the host institution, toward the success of CEMCA's activities were highlighted. The achievements and shortcoming, the constraints and the lesson learned from failures were also explained.

It was explained that during the year 2003-04 CEMCA undertook an extensive review and physically completed 8 projects out of 12 in hand. Their accounts were also finalized and settled during the year.

The Council noted the reports and the work done in areas of its mandate in tune with COL's activities and other areas relating to execution of projects sponsored by COL and outside agencies. It was also explained that CEMCA earned income by way of 15% institutional overheads on these projects thereby augmenting internal resources in a modest way.

- 6.3.2: The Council noted the observations of the members on some of the aspects of the functioning of CEMCA, which are detailed hereunder:
- 6.3.3: The lessons learnt from the implementation of project like “Development, Testing and Evaluating Multimedia Material on Aquaculture in Cross Cultural Settings” should be kept in view while undertaking future projects.
- 6.3.4: The Chair suggested that for undertaking mid term review of projects, the format being used by the Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India for monitoring projects, which is quite comprehensive, may be very useful in evaluation. It was explained that the RBM approach adopted by COL is being followed for evaluation of projects and other activities of CEMCA and that the format of DST will also be referred to avail of the benefit.
- 6.3.5: During the course of discussion, it was clarified by the Chair that the Board of Management of IGNOU has agreed in principle to host CEMCA for a further period of 5 years and that the outcome of evaluation of CEMCA will also be considered at the appropriate time for arriving at a final decision.
- 6.3.6: It was suggested that percentage expenditure on various items detailed in Expenditure Account may also be reflected.

Item No. 4: Plan of action for the year 2004-2005

- 6.4.1: The Council took note of the Plan of action for the year 2004-2005 in the area of (i) Strengthening institutional capacity in technology use in development (ii) Supporting COL initiatives and (iii) Transformation related activities of CEMCA.
- 6.4.2: During discussion the Chair suggested that while involving NGOs in implementation of Plans greater focus and preference should be given to less developed and remote areas. For example in India we could focus on such areas in states like Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and the states in the North East Region. Similarly, linkages with the National Core Group on Edusat Usage set up by the Government of India could be developed to benefit from Satellite Interactive Networks.

Item No. 5: Transformation of CEMCA into a Regional Centre for Networking and Collaboration

- 6.5.1: The Director, CEMCA explained that as part of its Three Year Plan 2003-2006, COL has envisaged the establishment of regional centres of excellence for the purpose of networking and collaboration in different regions of the Commonwealth. Instead of creating a new centre in the Asian region, COL has envisaged the transformation of CEMCA into a regional centre for networking

and collaboration. The process of transformation is in different phases. The first phase consisted of an external evaluation, which has been done; the second consisted of development of a Strategic Paper and a Plan of Action; while the third involves the implementation process. For this purpose, (i) The External Evaluation Report and (ii) A concept paper were presented for discussion by the Advisory Council. The following emerged out of discussion:

- 6.5.2: The Chairman observed that schedule for periodic training programs should be drawn well in advance and some responsibility should be shared with the major open university of each country in the region to identify training needs and in utilizing resources.
- 6.5.3: Dr. Ramli Mohammed suggested that CEMCA's core strength is in training and that corporate houses may be approached for financing/subsidizing training programs.
- 6.5.4: He suggested that it was a good idea to drop the high focus on media as media usage entails avoidable cost.
- 6.5.5: He observed that Training being the core area of strength more emphasize should be laid to identify areas of training needs. Training should be done on sustainable/cost recovery basis and trainees from less developed countries should be subsidized by charging premium from more developed countries like Singapore and Malaysia etc.
- 6.5.6: He observed that there is no dearth of experts in the region and emphasis should be laid on Primary, Secondary and Lifelong education.
- 6.5.7: Sir John suggested that India has enough expertise and focus should be on capacity building.
- 6.5.8: Dr. Gayathri suggested more publicity to regional activities so that the universities in the region may get involved proactively. She emphasized qualitative approach in training, especially in computer based training for which program-based framework should be drawn.
- 6.5.9: It was suggested by the Chair that need based and well-defined programs may be conducted for master trainers who should in their turn train others in their country through their parent institutions. While selecting the participants this may be kept in view.
- 6.5.10: It was observed by Mr. Narayanan that CEMCA being regional center of COL should continue to supplement the role of COL in the region. Survey for training needs should be made in Commonwealth countries to find training needs in Health, Education and Technology sectors and the infrastructure required.

- 6.5.11: Sir John emphasized CEMCA's role as regional presence rather than that of Regional center. He emphasized improved relations with the member governments and a role in policy advice. He also suggested an environmental scan for 2006-09 plan. He suggested CEMCA to be involved in a major empowerment experience and approach should be focused on programs rather than on Projects.
- 6.5.12: Dr. Ramli suggested that Asian Mass Communication Center Singapore could be utilized as a training resource center for training in mass communication. He stressed on training of master trainers, which has a multiplier effect in empowerment and institution building. In particular he suggested associating Govt. master trainers in the areas of HIV and Community health etc.
- 6.5.13: The Chair suggested that recommendations for future plans to be undertaken by CEMCA may be made by the members using the e-communication system of CEMCA. A consultation on these could then be considered.
- 6.5.14: Sir John emphasized sharing of training experiences, constitution of discussion groups to further the interest of various regional institutions. He in concluding remarks thanked all and wished closer relationship and joint programs between COL CEMCA and IGNOU

It was proposed to hold the next meeting of the Advisory council in September 2005 on a suitable date after IGNOU foundation day of September 20, 2005.

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

-Sd-
(Prof. H.P. Dikshit)
Chairman