

# COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

*Open and Distance Learning for Development*

## The Singapore Statement

### Preamble

In pursuance of the common aims of harnessing the potential of eLearning and ICTs to bring quality education and training to our fellow citizens, we the participants of the Orientation and Planning meeting on 'Virtual University, Flexible Learning' held at the National Institute of Education in Singapore from 12-16 September 2005, agree in principle to cooperate in the creation of a Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). We will work together in course development and supplementation, staff and systems development, research, and distance education management within the framework of existing academic activities and in consonance with the overall objectives of our respective ministries and institutions/organisations.

### The Statement

**Recognising** the need for providing opportunities for expanded access to education and training for human resource development in our countries as well as in other member states of the Commonwealth;

**Convinced** that existing capacities both human and institutional in the use of open and distance learning and ICT-enhanced education for both the on-campus and distance learner need to be enhanced;

**Committed** to delivering quality education and training programs that can be implemented widely in Commonwealth countries and that will be recognised by participating institutions; and

**Determined** to promote regional collaboration and partnerships;

We, the undersigned, constitute ourselves as a consortium and recommend that

- a Technical Steering Committee be set up to coordinate and implement the VUSSC initiative. Meetings would be held via electronic as well as in face to face mode. All developments to be reported to Ministers on an ongoing basis as well as at the 16<sup>th</sup> CCEM in 2006.
- a strategic plan be developed with appropriate proposals for funding
- a mechanism be set up for ongoing discussion and information-sharing. This would include all information relating to members of the core group as well as available infrastructure and resources in each country and will be updated regularly
- a coordination committee/focal point be nominated in each participating country/institution to steer the VUSSC proposal through the various statutory bodies and organise and oversee course development and delivery
- multiple media courses be developed in the areas of Teacher Education, Information and Communications Technology, Information Systems, Tourism and Hospitality, Nursing and Health Care, Technical and Vocational Education and Training & Life Skills, Management & Public Administration, Agriculture and Fisheries.



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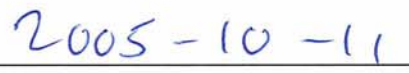
*Open and Distance Learning for Development*

- course development processes be initiated and short courses developed/adapted in the next one year. Course proposals will be submitted by December 2005 and complete courses developed by September 2006 for presentation to the core group by November 2006.
- the course materials developed will be available to all members of the consortium free
- all partners take such steps as are necessary to facilitate the effective and efficient administrative and operational implementation of the program
- COL facilitate appropriate linkages with existing bodies such as CKLN, PANet etc
- pan-Commonwealth standards and credit transfer mechanism be developed based on existing standards and protocols.
- other small states be allowed to join the consortium in the future
- training programs be initiated for capacity-building in content development and delivery. Specific areas to include eLearning and Instructional Design.

Having taken note of the core principles of the VUSSC and the recommendations made by the ministers of education during the 15<sup>th</sup> CCEM held in Scotland in October 2003, we the undersigned agree that:

- a) Our countries and institutions will work together, by sharing resources, experiences and expertise in order to meet the educational and training needs of our learners by providing quality education and training in a cost-effective manner.
- b) We support COL's commitment to undertake the necessary coordination and quality control, to provide or secure access to the necessary external expertise, and to facilitate networking.
- c) We will have regular consultations in the process of developing and implementing the program(s).
- d) We commit to participate in the program(s) by making available, within the capacities of each of our countries and institutions, the resources necessary to provide a quality-learning environment for our students.

  
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Sir John Daniel,  
President and CEO  
Commonwealth of Learning  
Canada

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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Stewart Marshall  
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**Barbados**

16 SEPTEMBER 2005  
Date

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Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports  
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16 SEPTEMBER 2005  
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16<sup>th</sup> September, 2005

Date

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**Guyana**

16<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Date

The Honourable Dr. Donald Rhodd  
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16<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Date

Dr. Ntsibane Ntlalapa  
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Khadeeja Adam  
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and Social Security  
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16<sup>th</sup> September 2005

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Mike Morris Chadstone  
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Date

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Dr. Walter S.C. Sukati  
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Date

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Si'atukimoana Fakafanua Vaea Tonga  
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