

# *citation*

## *Honorary Fellow of COL*

*Professor Uma Coomaraswamy, known to her close acquaintances as Uma, is a Sri Lankan.*

*Uma is an Emeritus Professor of Botany and a former Vice-Chancellor of the Open University of Sri Lanka. She held many responsible positions over her 40 years of service as a researcher, an academic, and an academic administrator in the Sri Lankan University System.*

*Uma launched her distinguished career with a degree in Botany from the University of Ceylon, a Ph.D. in Plant Virology from the University of London, and post-doctoral experience in Mycoplasma at the University of California. Even then, Uma was winning awards that included a Commonwealth Scholarship and then a Fulbright Fellowship. More recently, she received the Zonta Award for Women of Achievement, Science and Technology and the Silver Jubilee Award for outstanding contribution to the Open University of Sri Lanka.*

*Uma is known as a meticulous planner and she always includes fall back options well ahead of time. She is a distinguished scientist and administrator who practices a culture of highest standards for quality. She has led efforts to ensure and manage Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Learning. Her ability to motivate and inspire others is*

*exceptional, and flows from her belief that the road to success is helping others to succeed.*

*Uma's vision is to democratise higher education in Sri Lanka. She rejects the notion of the University as an ivory tower and the traditional belief that University is only for teaching, research and communication. She has pursued a passion for transferring university knowledge into broader society. Thus she has put the paradigm "Science for Knowledge, Knowledge for Progress and Development" into practice.*

*As the national coordinator for COL's Life Long Learning for Farmers or L3 Farmers, Uma is engaging the University Grants Commission, the Open University of Sri Lanka and four conventional Universities as the lead partners with the L3 Farmers project in Sri Lanka. Uma has also included villagers of the Presidential "Gama Neguma" initiative for national rural development as participants in the project. Thus, Uma is taking a strategic approach for rapid community development in Sri Lanka.*

*Mr. President and Acting Chairman, in recognition of her major and ongoing contributions to the advancement of distance education, I request you to confer on Professor Uma Coomaraswamy the title of Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning.*