

COMMUNIQUE

2ND AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Preamble

The 2nd African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) Conference and General Assembly hosted by the National Open University of Nigeria was held in Eko Hotel and Suites, Lagos, Nigeria from 8 – 11 July, 2008.

The theme of the Conference was “*Open and Distance Learning for Sustainable Development*” while the main objective was to discuss various ways by which the application of distance education policies and systems can contribute to sustainable development.

A total of three hundred and fifty participants attended the conference consisting of top government officials and policy-makers, managers and administrators in the academia, experts and other key stakeholders and practitioners in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in and outside Africa. Development partners and inter-governmental agencies such as UNESCO, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), and the World Bank were also represented at the Conference. The Conference was declared open by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, GCFR who was ably represented by the Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Igwe Aja-Nwachuku.

The keynote address, which canvassed the need to strengthen ODL as a viable and alternative mode for widening access to education at all levels, was presented by the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO, Ambassador (Professor) Michael Omolewa, CON. The President of Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Sir John Daniel, presented the closing address. Other agencies also presented their goodwill messages to the Conference.

The Conference sub-themes on which papers were presented and facilitated by eminent scholars, experts and practitioners during both plenary and parallel sessions covered a broad range of related and relevant issues:

1. ODL and Teacher Development
2. Meeting the Challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): The Role, Potential and Impact of ODL
3. Capacity Building in ODL
4. Quality Assurance in ODL
5. Collaboration and Partnerships in ODL: Models Challenges and Responses
6. E-Learning and ODL in Developing Nations: Problems and Prospects

Resolutions

We, the participants at the 2nd ACDE Conference and General Assembly, having

A reviewed

the progress made on implementation of resolution and commitments and triennial plan of action at the 1st ACDE Conference and General Assembly held in South Africa in 2005, in particular the Tswanghe Manifesto on Distance Education in Africa,

and

B. *recognizing that*

1. knowledge is central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA);
2. conventional education systems are unable to meet the increasing educational provision required to achieve these goals;
3. ODL has huge potential as a cost-effective mechanism to provide access to lifelong learning to students of all ages in a wide range of life circumstances and in the far corners of our countries;
4. ICTs are increasingly available to further enhance educational ODL provision;
5. ODL has been effectively employed in other parts of the world at all levels of education to develop human resources for sustainable national development;

6. a growing number of ODL programmes across our continent have demonstrated significant contributions to the MDGs and the attainment of EFA;
7. there are significant challenges in developing high quality materials rooted in the African context and in addressing the language skills of our students;

as well as that

8. ODL has played an important role in the education of many of Africa's leaders and intellectuals for nearly a century;
9. the process initiated and recommendation made it the ACDE stakeholders workshop held at UNISA Pretoria in February 2008 for the establishment of a Consortium of African Open and Distance Learning Universities and a Continental Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for ODL in Africa.

C. hereby resolve to *commit ourselves as members of ACDE to*

1. implement the resolutions and recommendations contained in the Communiqué of the February 2008 ACDE Stakeholders Workshop.
- 2 bring together the many disparate ODL initiatives across our continent into
- 3 purposive programmes of action;
- 4 work together to build our capacity to offer quality ODL and to systematically explore mechanisms to develop the language skills of our students
- 5 share reflections and evaluations of our initiatives, thus developing a body of evidence on the efficacy of ODL in achieving MDGs, EFA and other educational goals;
- 6 work together to develop and share open education resources grounded in the African context through collaborations, networking and synergies;
- 7 develop joint programmes which can be offered by different institutions across the continent;
- 8 uphold comparative quality standards in the provision of ODL; and
- 9 establish and sustain national ODL associations for advocacy, policy development and to provide ongoing platforms for sharing and creation of ODL resources and programmes;

D. *furthermore recommend and call upon*

1. the African Union (AU), to as a matter of urgency, declare a “***Decade of Open and Distance Learning in Africa***” to accelerate sustainable development in Africa;
2. African Union to commit adequate resources to ODL and support ACDE in achieving its mandate;
3. African governments should foster the establishment and nurturing of mechanisms to co-ordinate and promote the development of ODL in their countries, and ensure that they are appropriately resourced.
4. the Commonwealth of Learning to strengthen its collaboration with and support for ACDE in the actualization of its mandate especially in operationalising the Consortium of African Open Universities and the Continental Quality Assurance and Accreditation initiatives.

E. The ACDE Executive Board is hereby mandated to take the necessary steps to implement the resolutions contained in this communiqué.

Members of the Communiqué Drafting Committee

Name	Office/Address	Designation	Signature
Professor Dele Braimoh	UNISA, South Africa	Chairman	
Dr. Fred Barasa	Executive Director ACDE	Member	
Professor Israel Adu	NOUN, Nigeria	Member	
Prof. Mary Kolawole	NOUN, Nigeria	Member	
Ms. Jennie Glennie	SAIDE, South Africa	Member	
Prof. M.A. Izuagie	NOUN, Nigeria	Member	
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