

The Commonwealth of Learning

Institutional Arrangements for Commonwealth Co-operation in Distance Education

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP



Commonwealth Secretariat

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE · PALL MALL LONDON SW1Y 5HX

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Printed and published by
The Commonwealth Secretariat

May be purchased from
Commonwealth Secretariat Publications
Marlborough House
London SW1Y 5HX

ISBN 0 85092 328 X

CONTENTS

Letter of Presentation	2
Executive Summary	4
1 Origins and mandate	5
2 Purpose and functions	5
3 Structure	8
4 Governance	12
5 Staffing	13
6 Services and facilities	14
7 Priorities	15
8 Implementation	19
9 Budget and finance	21
Appendix A Draft Memorandum of Understanding	25
Appendix B Members of the Working Group	29

Marlborough House London SW1

H.E. Mr S.S. Ramphal
Commonwealth Secretary-General
Marlborough House
London SW1

8 June 1988

Dear Secretary-General

After Heads of Government had agreed, at their Vancouver meeting in October 1987, to create a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education you appointed us in January 1988 as a Working Group to develop the financial and organisational framework, to establish appropriate guidelines and set priorities. We have met twice in London in February and June of this year.

We now have pleasure in presenting our report which addresses the issues referred to us. We propose that Commonwealth Governments should create an Agency to serve a network of co-operating institutions constituting what we call the Commonwealth of Learning. We propose the Agency should have a small staff at its headquarters in Vancouver headed by a president serving as chief executive and should also have decentralised programmes and services in other regions of the Commonwealth. Overall direction and determination of policy should be the responsibility of a Board of Governors reporting at regular intervals to Commonwealth Ministers of Education and Heads of Government.

We believe that this new Commonwealth co-operative institution opens up tremendous possibilities for contributing to human resource development in member countries. It will offer citizens greatly enhanced opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills needed by their societies and for personal development. We are much encouraged to note the considerable number and scale of pledges already made by Commonwealth countries and hope that this report provides the necessary basis for attracting further commitments from those who have yet to indicate the nature of their contribution.

In order that the Commonwealth of Learning can make a prompt start it is essential that early steps are taken to appoint its Board of Governors and to recruit its senior staff. While no commitments can be entered into until the overall proposals have been formally agreed, we believe that there is already a sufficient indication of consensus among member countries to justify taking the initial steps, with appropriate consultation, towards identifying members of the first Board and its chairman, recruiting the president and some of the other senior staff of the Agency, and putting administrative mechanisms in place. Several months planning time could thus be gained, and we therefore urge you to proceed in this way.

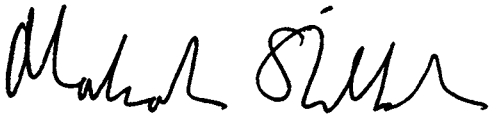
In conclusion we would like to express our great sense of appreciation to you for having entrusted us with this important task. It has been a privilege to play a part in shaping this exciting and potentially far-reaching enterprise. We see the Commonwealth of Learning as a significant step forward in Commonwealth co-operation for development, and one that will not only promote human resource development in member countries but will also contribute to strengthening the Commonwealth association itself. Finally, we would also like to thank the Secretariat for the effective staff and logistical support put at our disposal, enabling us to complete our task in the allotted time.

Please be assured that members of the group stand ready to provide any further help and support you may require.

Yours sincerely



J S Daniel



Malcolm Skilbeck



W L Renwick



Roger O Iredale



Akin Adesola



Hajah Misli binti Haji Awang



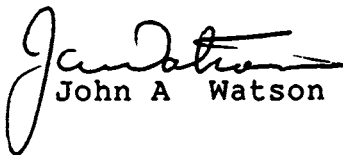
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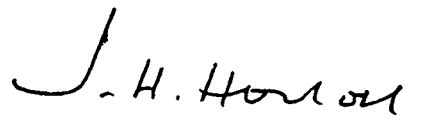
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out plans for a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education to be called the Commonwealth of Learning. Its purpose is to respond to the needs of human resource development through co-operative activity which will widen access to educational opportunity for students, will extend the range of programmes available to those who need them, will improve quality through the sharing of resources, will seek cost-effective solutions to large-scale educational needs and will focus on governmental and individual needs of high priority. This will be achieved by means of co-operative activities in distance education. The priority activities will include:

strengthening national capacity in distance education through staff training, improved communications, a better awareness of existing distance-education programmes, and collaboration in evaluation and research;

sharing of existing distance-education materials and developing new ones, possibly for use in several countries;

helping distance-teaching institutions to provide better services to students by facilitating the transfer of credit and improving study-support systems.

It will operate through a co-operative network of colleges, universities and other institutions and will use the most appropriate communication technologies to promote direct exchanges between them.

The Commonwealth of Learning will have its Agency headquarters in Vancouver and an information service based at the Open University in Britain. Regional activities will be promoted through a variety of structures. It is proposed to take advantage of the existence of the regional universities of the South Pacific and the West Indies and of the offer by the governments of India and Nigeria to host regional units. A unit in Malta concerned with the particular educational needs of small states is proposed.

The resources available for the first quinquennium already total £9.5m in convertible currency, and at least £5m in earmarked or in-kind contributions. Further contributions from member countries are expected and other funding will be sought on a project basis.

The Commonwealth of Learning will have a Governing Board comprising nine government appointees of whom five will represent the largest donor governments, three members appointed by the Board, two members appointed by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, together with a Chairman, the Secretary-General or representative and the president of the Agency. The Board will work under the authority of a Memorandum of Understanding between Commonwealth governments. A draft of this is included as an appendix.

1 ORIGINS AND MANDATE

1 We were invited by the Commonwealth Secretary-General to serve as a working group with the following terms of reference:

(a) To consider and make recommendations about appropriate arrangements for the creation of a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education, in accordance with the decisions of Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Vancouver in October 1987.

(b) To report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General by 30 June 1988.

2 These terms of reference in turn reflect the decisions made by Heads of Government, meeting in Vancouver in 1987. They commended the Briggs report Towards a Commonwealth of Learning and in its light 'agreed to create a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education, which may become the University of the Commonwealth for co-operation in distance education'; they also endorsed in principle a Canadian proposal for a university and college network for distance education, with a headquarters in Vancouver and units in other parts of the Commonwealth. Heads of Government requested the establishment of a Working Group 'to develop the financial and organisational framework, establish appropriate guidelines and set priorities for the institution with a view to ensuring the relevance of programmes and the appropriateness of educational technologies to countries' particular situations and needs'. In the light of this our report recommends priorities and an organisational structure in the context of the purposes and functions set out in Section 2 below. We consider organisation both in Section 3 on structure and in Section 4 on governance, and we look at its implications for staffing in Section 5 and for accommodation and services in Section 6. We examine priorities in relation to programme activities in Section 7 and examine appropriate technologies both in that section and in Section 8 on implementation. The financial framework appears in Section 9.

3 In response to our mandate we have met twice in London and established a planning sub-committee which met in Vancouver and Milton Keynes in order to expedite work between our meetings.

2 PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS

4 Our recommendations are directed towards the establishment of a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education as called for by Heads of Government. The institution will help Commonwealth countries to develop in a cost-effective way their facilities for distance learning in order to enhance educational opportunity as a means of assisting their social and economic development, particularly human resource development, and will strengthen their key institutions. The arrangements will depend for their success on tapping the experience and expertise of educational bodies throughout the Commonwealth but will in turn contribute to their institutional development. Our concern is with the widest range of post-school-age learners and our recommendations are to select from the widest range of communication technologies, from the simplest to the most sophisticated, taking account of cost, of convenience for learners, and of the

state of development of communication infrastructure in member countries. The institution should set priorities with a view to ensuring the relevance of programmes and the appropriateness of education technologies to member countries' particular situations and needs.

5 International co-operative activity in this area has been made possible by the dramatic expansion of distance education and the new communication technologies put at its disposal over the last quarter century. Within many Commonwealth countries distance education has been used to widen access to education and to meet shortages of trained manpower. It has often proved an economic and effective way of doing so. As a result the Commonwealth can look forward to obtaining benefits that are made possible by using a range of appropriate communication technologies in education but can most effectively be achieved only through international co-operation.

6 Co-operation has to be worked for. The Briggs group examined the educational and development needs that could be addressed through co-operation in distance education and recommended the establishment of a university institution to promote Commonwealth co-operation. Subsequently Heads of Government expressed their intention to work towards the longer term end that, 'any learner anywhere in the Commonwealth shall be able to study any distance-teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth'. In our recommendations we have sought both to keep in view the longer term potential which a new co-operative venture brings for the Commonwealth and for the advancement of education within it, and to make realistic recommendations for activities that can be launched in the early stages, with the funds likely to be available.

7 Our proposals are for what we have called the Commonwealth of Learning, using this term to embrace the whole range of co-operative distance-education activities undertaken within a network of colleges and universities and other educational and training institutions. For convenience we have used the term Agency for the institutional structure that facilitates co-operation, comprising both a headquarters to be set up in Vancouver and units in other parts of the Commonwealth. It will work as a multilateral venture whose main concern is with the priorities of Commonwealth member countries in human resource development. Some activities will be undertaken by the headquarters, some by regional bodies under its direction and some by institutions working together for a particular purpose.

8 The possible functions for the new enterprise, which were identified and examined in detail by the Briggs group, will include development of institutions (para 9), of materials and techniques (para 10) and of institutional support services for students (para 11).

9 To support institutional development, there are demands for co-operative work in four domains. In each domain such collaboration could strengthen national capacity in distance education and open learning.

9.1 Institutions require information both on the processes of distance education and on the content and availability of distance-teaching materials particularly where there are proposals for their exchange and shared use.

9.2 Many educational institutions seek training for their staff in distance education and there is scope for co-operative activity.

9.3 Colleges and universities can benefit from inter-institutional links through new forms of communication technology both to develop their on-campus teaching and to support their programmes for off-campus students. Such electronic links allow for shared teaching and joint seminars, for cooperative research and access to a wider range of data bases and for administrative co-operation.

9.4 Commonwealth co-operation in evaluation and applied research in the methods of distance education can yield benefits both for individual institutions and for co-operative ventures.

10 Commonwealth colleges and universities can benefit in at least three ways by sharing teaching materials and techniques.

10.1 In some cases educational needs can be met from material that already exists within the Commonwealth and can be used as it stands or in an adapted form. This is only possible as long as arrangements can be made for material, or rights to it, to become available to institutions other than those which developed it. The Commonwealth of Learning will have a crucial role in helping to negotiate such satisfactory arrangements.

10.2 In other cases, where educational needs cannot be met from already existing material or where common courses can best be developed on a co-operative basis, there is scope for commissioning the development of new materials.

10.3 In yet others the sharing of teaching techniques will enhance the distance education process.

11 The Commonwealth of Learning should not teach learners directly but two of its functions will bear directly on learners' needs; mutual accreditation procedures and the development of tutorial and support services.

11.1 Students following a course developed at an institution other than their own seek the assurance that they can gain appropriate credit for their work. As the sharing of distance-teaching resources between Commonwealth countries grows so there will be an increasing need for co-operation on the recognition of credit. Work on these issues should be related to the exchange of information on teaching materials.

11.2 Distance education is made more effective by good local support services to students. There will be scope for co-operative activity to assist in the development of such services and in this the Commonwealth of Learning can assist greatly. The development itself, in our view, should take place at the individual distance-teaching institutions which must also have the prime responsibility for running these services as an essential element of their provision for students.

3 STRUCTURE

12 To perform these functions the Commonwealth of Learning will require a structure which provides for that measure of central direction of policy and of its decentralised activities necessary for coherence and efficiency. At the same time, that same structure needs to be capable of creating and maintaining effective and harmonious relationships between the Agency itself and the institutions at grass-roots level that will form the network of participating organisations. In addition to the links with universities and colleges the Commonwealth of Learning will need to develop relationships for specific projects or activities with organisations of a different kind including multinational corporations, other multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, World Health Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organisation and United Nations Development Programme, and also trusts and foundations.

13 Taking these factors into account, our proposal is for a structure that will support activities of four kinds. First, we propose that there should be a headquarters for the Agency with the responsibilities set out in para 14. Second, it will be appropriate for some activities that are of benefit to the Commonwealth as a whole to be decentralised (see para 15-16). Third, at least in some parts of the Commonwealth, co-operative activities can be decentralised to meet regional needs through regional co-operation (paras 17-24). Fourth, and most important, the Agency will need links with colleges, universities and distance-teaching institutions throughout the Commonwealth; these are the institutions which, together with the Agency, will form a network of co-operating partners (para 25).

14 In order to run coherent programmes the headquarters will thus require powers of initiative, co-ordination and direction as well as adequate funding and efficient means of communication with those undertaking decentralised activities. The central core of activities at the headquarters will include:

central management and direction of common services and co-operative activities;

policy oversight of all decentralised activities;

identification, in association with regional and national institutions and with governments, of educational needs to which Commonwealth-wide programmes should respond;

co-ordination of training and support for it;

applied research and evaluation; monitoring of the activities of the Commonwealth of Learning itself;

arranging for the acquisition of materials or rights to them and facilitating their delivery to and use by collaborating institutions;

arranging for the development of materials, generally through subcontracts but on occasion at the headquarters.

15 While these powers of co-ordination are necessary, the Commonwealth of Learning will benefit from an ability to decentralise and to work with and through partners in any part of the Commonwealth. In some cases there will be advantages in arranging for services to be provided on a pan-Commonwealth basis, from an appropriate institution away from the Agency headquarters. The

two guiding principles for such agreements are that decisions on policy should rest with the governing board of the Commonwealth of Learning and that general Commonwealth-wide facilities and services should be made available on comparable terms to institutions throughout the Commonwealth. Specific projects mainly benefiting industrialised countries would be carried out on a basis of cost recovery. There is an existing international information service on distance education (the International Centre for Distance Learning) at the British Open University, and considerable experience there of working on the related questions of credit transfer. It is proposed to develop these services for the Commonwealth mainly at that institution with assistance offered by the British Government for those purposes. Efforts will be made to ensure that advantage is also taken of experience in other parts of the Commonwealth.

16 There is a possibility of establishing a centre of a rather different kind in Malta where the Commonwealth of Learning could avail itself of a generous offer by the Government to make facilities available. The work of a centre in Malta might build on existing interests and strengths in Malta in sea-related studies and educational management in small states and concentrate on the application of distance education to the problems of small states. These would include marine issues in particular, bearing in mind that Malta is already the locus of the International Ocean Institute. It would address common educational needs which are particular to small states and especially to island countries, issues that are already defined as a Commonwealth priority. There could be useful linkages with the South Pacific and the Caribbean. Malta's location would also enable it to serve as a bridge between co-operative activities in distance education in the Commonwealth and within Europe. Initially it is proposed that any services to be developed in Malta should be made available by means of a contract between the Agency and the University of Malta which is already developing a centre for distance learning. In the longer term, however, a closer constitutional relationship might develop. The Secretariat is exploring with the Malta Government more detailed arrangements for such a centre. Subject to the acceptability of these to the Agency and consultation with those who would be most fully served by the development of such a centre, we hope that it will in this way be able to take advantage of the Malta Government's offer.

17 For some activities the Commonwealth of Learning will work most effectively on a regional basis. This will facilitate the articulation of local needs and proposals, and will provide institutions and governments in each region with a greater sense of participation in and ownership of the Commonwealth of Learning network. A regional basis for co-operation has particular advantages in terms of similar cultural and socio-economic conditions where neighbouring countries share common characteristics; in terms of physical convenience of access where distance educators need to travel for training, consultancies, planning meetings and conferences; in terms of co-ordination where joint distance-education projects on a regional basis are proposed; and in terms of viability where individual countries' small size makes common services or jointly owned facilities desirable.

18 There is varied experience of regional co-operation in different parts of the Commonwealth and there are advantages in experimenting with a range of different structures for this purpose. In some parts of the Commonwealth existing structures to support co-operation among Commonwealth countries in human resource development may provide a base for co-operation in distance education. In both the Caribbean and the South Pacific there are regional universities which already make considerable use of distance education. In Southern Africa there is a co-ordinating council for educational co-operation between Commonwealth countries comprising the permanent secretaries of all

seven ministries of education. The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) is considering a plan, drawn up with the support of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, to create an institutional base for co-operation in distance education and there is already experience of co-operation between distance-teaching institutions in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland through a regional Distance Learning Association. In West Africa and Asia, major regional organisations exist which embrace both Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries.

19 It cannot however be assumed that a regional framework would prove suitable everywhere or for every form of co-operation. Some countries, such as those in the Mediterranean or the Indian Ocean, have few potential Commonwealth partners in their region. Geographical proximity does not necessarily entail homogeneity in culture or level of economic development among neighbouring countries. Some existing regional organisations may be found less acceptable to those in the region or less appropriate than others as a base for Commonwealth co-operative activity in distance education. To some extent too the logic of the development of communication technologies means that a local physical base for information storage is becoming less necessary. Where information can be accessed or exchanged electronically distance may not be the most important barrier to co-operation.

20 For this reason we recommend an exploratory approach to the build-up of regional arrangements, recognising that there can be no uniform pattern, that the Commonwealth of Learning will have to learn from experience how best to organise regional activities, and that any structures established should be flexible and capable of modification. As a general guide we envisage regional co-operation taking place through networks of participating institutions and agencies. Some of their collaborative activities might be orchestrated by regional units serving in a co-ordinating capacity. Their visibility would be more in terms of their activities and functions than of physical facilities.

21 The various regional arrangements should be based on certain guiding principles. First, arrangements to promote regional co-operation should be there to support and serve institutions and programmes in their regions and should not control or direct them. Second, such arrangements should in no way act as a bureaucratic barrier standing between participating educational institutions or between them and the pan-Commonwealth institutions of the Commonwealth of Learning. In other words every participant in the Commonwealth of Learning should have a right of direct access to other parts of the network. Third, modes of operation at regional level should be subject to broad policy guidelines laid down by the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning. Fourth, any common services developed in the region should be provided on comparable terms to all Commonwealth institutions in the region. Fifth, any regional unit while receiving some finance for regional activities from the headquarters of the Agency should, after consultation with its host institution and the Agency headquarters, be able to raise additional programme funding. Sixth, there should be appropriate consultation with governments and other relevant bodies in each region both at the stage of establishment of regional units and also for monitoring their progress.

22 The functions to be performed through mechanisms for regional co-operation might include:

collecting and disseminating information within the region, assisting institutions in gaining access to information, and passing information on to other regions;

co-ordinating activities in staff training, consultancy, research and course development in response to demand;

planning and executing collaborative projects and programmes in areas of common concern;

promoting the development of a regional framework for credit transfer for distance-teaching programmes;

developing expertise in particular subject areas;

generally facilitating the development of distance education in the region and assisting institutions in locating resources for institutional development.

23 In accordance with the approach we have outlined, we see merit in experimenting with the creation of a variety of different structures to promote regional co-operation. In some cases it may be appropriate to invite an existing institution to set up a unit to promote regional co-operation. A unit of this kind would be constituted on a modest scale. A flexible and fairly short-term agreement, running initially for not more than three years so as to ensure that the maximum flexibility is retained, should be negotiated between the host institution and the Commonwealth of Learning. The agreement would provide for monitoring of the work of the unit so as to provide information for the developing policy and practice of the Agency.

24 In examining the potential for regional co-operation we have taken into account expressions of interest by a number of Commonwealth governments and also existing structures for regional co-operation with the aim of ensuring that regional activities for co-operation in distance education could be mounted quickly and effectively. We assume that the Agency will, as a priority, take advantage of the existence of the two regional universities of the South Pacific and the West Indies and seek to develop appropriate structures for co-operation in association with them. Subject to regional discussion we would also favour the development of regional co-operation through units housed at the Indira Gandhi National Open University and at a Nigerian institution to be identified. If an institution is established to promote co-operation in distance education within SADCC (para 18) then this would provide a suitable location and structure for regional activities supported by the Agency in this region.

25 A range of post-secondary institutions, not restricted to those currently engaged in distance teaching, would be partners in the Commonwealth of Learning. Central co-ordination for the network would be provided by the Agency in its role as broker and catalyst, and as promoter of new initiatives. So far as possible the Agency's programmes would involve participating institutions as contractors and as the locus of activities. It is envisaged that participation in the network would generally be open to public and nonprofit institutions throughout the Commonwealth involved in the education of adults at a distance. Naturally some institutions and colleges would wish to have more frequent and regular contact than others with the Agency. Within the overall network one could also envisage the emergence of certain subsidiary specialist networks of institutions engaging for example in training or in sharing courses in certain subject areas, sometimes by means of direct communication links. Institutions in particular regions might also develop particularly close working relationships, sometimes through their own regional or sub-regional distance-education associations.

4 GOVERNANCE

26 The established convention is for Commonwealth institutions to be established by means of a Memorandum of Understanding between governments and it is proposed to follow this convention for the Commonwealth of Learning. Appendix A is a draft Memorandum. This sets out the functions of the Agency and, once agreed, will give it a legal personality and a legal framework for its activities.

27 The draft Memorandum sets out our proposals for governance of the Commonwealth of Learning. It takes account of the experience both of existing Commonwealth agencies and of other international educational bodies.

28 As suggested in para 6, in drafting the Memorandum we have sought to provide both for the Commonwealth of Learning's immediate needs and for future development. Heads of Government envisaged that the scope and functions of the Agency might develop once it had been proved successful and sufficient resources were available. Accordingly we propose that its status and powers should be framed in terms that will allow evolution and development to take place in response to changing needs, developmental priorities and levels of available resources.

29 The Commonwealth of Learning will need a Governing Board which will have overall responsibility for its policy and activities. The Board will determine policies for the Agency as a whole, including both the headquarters and any regional and decentralised activities. In considering an appropriate constitution for the Board, we have taken account of the decision by member governments that it should include both government representatives and distinguished individuals. We emphasise the need for it to be representative of all parts of the Commonwealth, including donor countries, to have members who can bring a knowledge of education generally including some with a specialist knowledge of distance education, and members from the business and communication sectors. We envisage that members appointed by governments may, as in the case of the other appointees, be drawn from any of these sectors. We see a need to balance continuity against the refreshment from new insights that will come from an element of rotation in its membership. We favour a board large enough to be representative but small enough to be effective and economic.

30 We realise that the constitution of the Board will require a balance between donors and others, and between large countries and small. It will be necessary to ensure that it meets the needs of the Commonwealth as a whole and can act in the interests of Commonwealth developing countries, bearing in mind that any Commonwealth country should be able to benefit from the work of the Commonwealth of Learning. Our recommendation is therefore, as set out in the draft Memorandum of Understanding at Appendix A, for a Board with sixteen or seventeen members. Nine members will be appointed by governments, five of them by the governments that have pledged the largest financial contributions for the forthcoming three financial years; three members will be appointed by the Board itself and two by the Commonwealth Secretary-General. The Secretary-General, or the Secretary-General's representative and the president of the Agency will also be members. The Board will appoint a chairman who will have been nominated by the Secretary-General after due consultation; the chairman may or may not already be a member of the Board. It is the intention that members should be named individuals rather than office-holders but, in the case of government representatives, it will be in order for an alternate to attend meetings. Members will be appointed in accordance with the principles we have set out.

31 To allow for an element of rotation the triennial conference of education ministers will determine which four countries, other than the largest donors, should appoint Board members. For the same reason members will be appointed for a three-year term, may be reappointed for a further term, but should not serve a longer consecutive period than six years. We have also provided in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Board to avail itself of advice from organisations or governments significantly assisting the Agency by empowering it to invite up to five persons to attend Board meetings on an advisory basis.

32 For the first Board, which needs to be established well before the next conference of education ministers, we recommend that the Secretary-General after appropriate consultation should propose which four countries other than major donors should appoint Board members and should himself, after due consultation, appoint five individual members to the Board. This will enable a properly constituted Board including both government and individual members to be set up without delay. As in para 30 we recommend that the Secretary-General, again after consultation, should nominate the first Chairman for appointment by the Board.

33 While the Board will have overall responsibility for the activities of the Agency we assume that it may wish to appoint one or more committees with specialist functions to act between its own meetings. It may, for example, wish to appoint an executive committee, especially to oversee the early stages of work. This and other possibilities will be open to the Board provided the Memorandum of Understanding empowers it to appoint committees. The recommended draft does this.

34 The Memorandum lays down the responsibilities of the Board and the president. The Board will have overall responsibility for determining principles, policies and priorities, for considering and approving the work programme, and for approving the budget. Initially it will need to adopt staff regulations and financial regulations. Day-to-day responsibility will rest with the president who will be responsible for preparing the work programme and budget for consideration by the Board, for implementing the work programme, for controlling the budget, and for reporting on the work of the Agency. The president will also be responsible for appointing the staff; in the case of the senior staff this will be after consultation with and with the agreement of the chairman.

35 The Commonwealth of Learning will need to remain in close touch with Commonwealth governments and with Commonwealth educational developments generally. In order to facilitate this we recommend that the Agency should report every three years to the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and that it should also submit a report to the biennial meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government.

5 STAFFING

36 We have considered both the type of staff to be appointed to the Agency for the Commonwealth of Learning and the principles that should guide staffing.

37 The president as chief executive of the Agency will be appointed by the Board of Governors and will be responsible to the Board for the administration and management of the Agency and its activities. The appointee would need to be in a position to negotiate at the highest level with governments and to command immediate respect in any college or university in the Commonwealth. The appointee might thus be someone who is already a university

vice-chancellor or holding a comparable educational post but this is not necessarily the only appropriate background for the post. Our recommendation is that the successful candidate is likely to be an educational leader of international stature who combines international experience with knowledge and understanding of the application of distance education in development, excellent interpersonal skills and demonstrated ability in government relations, management and fund-raising. The successful candidate will require the energy, initiative and innovative ability to launch the new organisation.

38 In addition to the president the Agency will require two groups of staff: professional and educational staff concerned with the Agency's main functions (information, training, research and evaluation, communication technology and course development); and administrative, technical and support staff. A proportion of the staff will be on secondment. Beyond the staff of the Agency there will, of course, be many personnel working under contract for specific projects.

39 Where staff are employed at a regional unit, appointment to these posts will be the subject of appropriate regional consultation and of agreement between the host institution at which the unit is housed and the Agency.

40 Staff policies generally will apply the criterion agreed for the Commonwealth Secretariat that, 'the paramount consideration in the selection of staff and in the determination of conditions of service will be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, due regard being paid to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible within the Commonwealth'. The Agency will offer equal opportunities to men and women. Current practice at the Secretariat and at UN agencies is generally to appoint staff on fixed-term contracts and the Agency will also follow this practice.

41 As the Agency headquarters will be in Vancouver we recommend that, following international practice, salaries should be related to salary levels for academic and public service posts in Canada. Actual salary costs to the Agency will need to take account of the tax-exempt status to be sought for the Agency and of the employment of staff on short-term contracts. Where staff are recruited from outside Canada it will be necessary to provide expatriation allowances, passages (including leave passages) for the staff member spouse and children, and transport of personal effects.

42 Where staff are seconded to the Agency headquarters, with their salaries in Vancouver paid by the Agency, a working principle is that there should not generally be marked discrepancies between their net pay and the net pay of core staff. Where staff normally based at the headquarters are employed elsewhere, the principle is that they should not be disadvantaged because of this fact. Where, however, services are provided under contract to the Agency by another institution, we assume that salaries of staff concerned will relate to local conditions and will be of no direct concern to the Agency.

6 SERVICES AND FACILITIES

43 In considering the accommodation and services needed we have assumed that the activities of the Commonwealth of Learning will be decentralised as far as possible. Where the Agency is developing or commissioning materials, much of the work will be undertaken at locations away from the headquarters office. As far as possible it will promote direct exchange between Commonwealth institutions. It will generally buy in production services rather than set up its own facilities.

44 The government of British Columbia has generously offered to provide to the headquarters of the Agency up to 15 000 square feet of office space in central Vancouver for the first five years of the Agency's operation. As far as we can foresee, this will provide ample space and would allow for the employment of up to about 50 staff members. The cost of renting whatever portion is utilised, as the headquarters staff increases, will be part of the proposed contribution in kind from the British Columbia government to the establishment of the Commonwealth of Learning. The Government of British Columbia is prepared to add to its intended cash contribution to the operational budget of the Agency monies realised from the sub-letting of that portion of the total allocated space which is not utilised by the Agency. Canada has also offered to provide communication equipment for the Headquarters office and selected regional units.

45 The headquarters of the Agency will need easy communication, by whatever channels are most appropriate, with all parts of the Commonwealth and facilities to enable it to make use of information and teaching materials communicated to it in any form. These will include telex, electronic mail and facsimile, and facilities for reviewing audiovisual materials and computer software in a variety of formats and arranging for their copying and reproduction. Its communications and audiovisual centre will need to be equipped so that it can handle communications and materials in various different formats (e.g. floppy disks of the main standard sizes and standards; video recordings for PAL, NTSC and possibly SECAM). Facilities will also be required to allow it to take part in exchanges of voice and data with co-operating agencies. Any location where decentralised activities are undertaken for the Agency will similarly require communication facilities on a more modest scale.

46 The Agency will require normal office services including some facilities for printing and reproduction of documents including desk-top publishing. Appropriate arrangements for audit and for legal services will be needed as specified under the headquarters agreement with the Government of Canada.

47 The British Open University has confirmed that it will accommodate the information service of the Commonwealth of Learning. The University has adequate computer facilities and communication links for this service.

48 For a centre in Malta ample accommodation is available in the University of Malta's original building in Valletta which already houses the University's Foundation for International Studies and the International Ocean Institute.

49 Free physical facilities for regional units offered by India and Nigeria will be used for regional co-operative activities that are consistent with emerging policies for future developments of the network.

7 PRIORITIES

50 The Agency's programmes will derive from its purpose and functions, and the priorities they entail (see section 2). In the light of these we are led by the assessment of human resource development needs reported by the Briggs committee, and by our own experience, to suggest certain important activities on which the Commonwealth of Learning could usefully embark. We believe they meet the criteria of appropriateness to socio-economic conditions, considerations of sustainability, relevance to the development priorities of member countries and the existing state of their communication technology, the need to develop institutional capacity, and the enhancement of impact through

possibilities open to the Commonwealth of Learning. As noted in para 4 it will be necessary to ensure that the Agency's plans are for an economic and cost-effective approach to the meeting of educational needs. We would not wish to constrain its choices in advance, for in practice the Agency would need to develop and adapt its work responsively in the light of priorities of member countries and evolving opportunities and on the basis of evaluation of the effectiveness of its own first activities. Our presentation of these possibilities follows the order of functions set out in paras 8 to 11 and should not be read as giving an order of priority.

51 As noted in para 15 it is intended to base information activities for the Commonwealth of Learning primarily at the International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL) housed at the British Open University with the aid of funds from the British government. An early task for the Governing Board will be to agree terms that ensure the Commonwealth of Learning's policy direction of this service. The Commonwealth of Learning's information activities could include:

maintaining contact with distance-teaching institutions in the Commonwealth and providing a free information service to them based on ICDL's databases and documentation centre;

expanding the existing collections at ICDL in order to maintain a comprehensive collection of documentation on institutions, on programmes and courses, on appropriate technology for distance education, and on the developing practice of distance education;

building up a collection of sample course materials so that it is comprehensive in terms of the representation of Commonwealth institutions;

developing and maintaining its communication links with institutions in the Commonwealth so that the collection is readily accessible to them;

supporting the development of information activities at the Commonwealth of Learning's regional units;

designing and developing systems for the effective cataloguing of teaching materials and for arranging that hard copies of these can be made readily available to institutions within the Commonwealth of Learning network.

Particular attention will be necessary to strengthening the capacity of individual distance-teaching institutions, including regional centres, to participate effectively in the exchange of information. This will include the development of information and library services, acquisition of appropriate equipment, and staff training and consultancy.

52 Information will generally be provided free of charge insofar as it is a service supporting the developmental ends of the Commonwealth of Learning. It will, however, be appropriate to draw up for the information centre a scale of user fees that could be applied in respect of enquiries needing an unusually large amount of staff time, or enquiries from industrialised countries, or from outside the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth of Learning may in some cases choose to waive a user fee to take account of the offsetting value of information provided by the enquiring institution.

53 Two categories of training can be identified. First, there are many needs for the full-time staff of distance-teaching institutions to obtain training in the techniques of distance education, including administration, counselling, the organisation of student support services, research and evaluation and the production of print and audiovisual materials. Second, many academic staff require training in the writing of distance-teaching materials in order to help them adapt their skills in face-to-face teaching to a different medium. There are demands for training of both kinds throughout the Commonwealth and there is already some experience of providing it through face-to-face courses and through distance-teaching methods. Courses on distance education, mainly to meet the first group of needs, are available from a considerable number of distance-teaching institutions within the Commonwealth. In the light of these developments and of a review to be undertaken of these materials and of training needs the following are proposed as initial training activities for the Agency:

arrange to make as widely available as possible existing materials for training in the techniques of distance education;

support, where necessary, the development of further training materials to meet needs not covered by existing materials;

provide tutorial back-up in association with regional units and institutions in the network for such training;

promote appropriate seminars and workshops and facilitate staff exchanges and secondments;

develop a long-term regional training programme with regional units with the aim of making each region self-sufficient in training as far as possible;

within this programme work with institutions initially in two regions to develop a regional programme for the training of academic staff in the techniques of distance education as these apply to particular subject areas;

launch training programmes for staff working on distance-teaching materials for nonformal education.

54 The University of the South Pacific and the University of the West Indies have extensive experience of using modern forms of communication technology for linking scattered campuses. It is proposed that the Agency should begin working in this domain in co-operation with these two Universities. Preliminary consideration suggests that it will be possible to build on their experience with a view to developing joint programmes of teaching and research that use links between their centres and campuses and educational institutions in other regions.

55 We recommend a programme of research and evaluation with activities of three kinds. The first will be to continue the investigations already launched by the Secretariat into educational problems to which the work of the Agency may be relevant and into current Commonwealth activities in distance education. The second will be to provide formative evaluation of the effectiveness of the Agency's own work. This will require continuing educational and financial monitoring of the work of the Commonwealth of Learning. Among other issues there could usefully be examination of access and student performance as affected by programmes supported by the Agency, of

the use of courses, of costs and organisational structures. Third it will monitor the development of research at institutions in the network and elsewhere on distance education and on the use of communication technologies in education, and support such research as it can. Thus the Agency's initial aims will be to use research as a way of informing and developing policy both for itself and for co-operating institutions.

56 In promoting the shared use, adaptation, and where appropriate development of teaching materials, the Commonwealth of Learning will need to consider issues of three kinds: about the demand for materials; about their supply, examining what already exists and what needs to be developed; and about the modalities of their exchange and distribution, taking account of the media they use and constraints on their reproduction and use including issues of licensing and copyright. In order to gain experience of all three kinds of issue studies have been commissioned for the group of the potential for Commonwealth co-operation in materials in four areas that seemed to us of widespread significance: science, accountancy, rural development and education. In these studies, and in particular in the study on rural development, particular attention will be paid to the basic educational and vocational needs of women. Studies are also being initiated on mathematics, engineering, and health. These case studies are looking at the availability of existing materials, at the extent to which these might be of use at institutions other than those at which they were developed, at the needs for further materials development, and at the narrower and more technical issues. The case studies, which will be completed later in the year, will be made available to the Agency once it is established. In examining these subject areas we are not, of course, arguing that they are the only ones on which the Agency should launch work, but believe that they would make possible an early start that would be of significant value to human resource development in a range of Commonwealth countries. We note, too, that Education Ministers saw co-operatives, environmental education and population education as priorities and assume that the Board of Governors will take this into account in shaping its programme.

57 Preliminary enquiries confirm both the existence of demand for distance-teaching materials in these areas of human resource development and of the practicability of co-operation in the use of teaching materials. In accountancy a significant proportion of the content is common to a large number of Commonwealth countries and teaching materials are already being developed by one of the professional bodies which is interested in making them available through the Commonwealth of Learning. In science a number of universities already teaching externally are limited in the range of science subjects they can offer and there have been expressions of support for collaborative work in this area. In teacher education and in rural development there are indications of widespread and unsatisfied demands for in-service training; while the context of these subjects requires that materials should be closely related to national conditions, there is also scope for a Commonwealth approach based on elements that are common to a number of different countries.

58 While electronic technologies are used by some Commonwealth distance-teaching institutions, a programme of co-operation and exchange based mainly on printed materials is both the simplest to get off the ground and one that meets the needs of most countries. Studies carried out for the Briggs group showed that print was the dominant medium for distance education in most developing Commonwealth countries. At the same time we recognise the need for the Commonwealth of Learning to play an innovative role in exploring the appropriate use of advanced communication technology.

59 Work to facilitate credit transfer and the mutual recognition of credit is expected to grow as the Commonwealth of Learning develops programmes for the sharing and exchange of teaching materials. There are, however, initial steps to be taken in order to make these possible. One is to ensure that, as information about course materials is compiled and made available, this contains the most appropriate information about the level and possible credit-rating of that material. This process needs to be closely related to the development of the information service (see para 51). More broadly, it is necessary to investigate in detail how the existing experience of recognising credit within institutions can be adapted to cover the needs of the Commonwealth as a whole and of the particular circumstances of distance education. In order to do this, we support a proposal by the British Open University for a feasibility study, to be undertaken as soon as possible after the establishment of the Commonwealth of Learning, with the following terms of reference:

to identify the number of higher education institutions to be covered and the extent to which these cover both conventional and distance-teaching institutions;

to identify the range of data to be collected;

to examine existing arrangements for intra-country and inter-country credit transfer;

to estimate potential demand for inter-country credit transfer;

in the light of the above to examine the most cost-effective way of disseminating information on credit transfer to enquirers.

We recommend that, as part of its contribution to the Commonwealth of Learning, the British Government be asked to fund this study.

8 IMPLEMENTATION

60 If our report commends itself to governments the first step in implementing their decision to establish the Commonwealth of Learning will be the acceptance by governments of a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the constitution and governing structure of the Agency (see paras 26-35). We hope that Governments will find it possible to signify their agreement to our report by the end of July and that the Memorandum of Understanding will have been formally adopted by September 1988.

61 We are concerned that action to implement the recommendations in this report should be taken with due consideration but without delay. The key steps that will need to be taken in the near future include the establishment of the Board and arranging for its first meeting, the identification of a president and key staff, the completion of preliminary planning work, and preparing for the Agency's first activities. We note that this work is being undertaken by the Secretariat which will continue to pursue it until the Commonwealth of Learning is in a position to take it over. We have ourselves already constituted a planning sub-committee which stands ready to assist the Secretary-General in any way he wishes.

62 Thereafter we would urge that the first meeting of the Governing Board should be held in Vancouver at the earliest possible date in order to provide a framework for the Agency's activities and would hope that this might be

arranged for October. We assume that the Board will at that meeting establish the committee structure necessary for the Agency's critical first year's work and future development. Action will then be necessary on three fronts: on staffing (paras 63-65); on logistical arrangements for both the Vancouver and other offices (paras 66-67); and on the programme (para 68).

63 At our request the Secretary-General is taking steps to identify candidates for the post of president so that the Board could consider making an appointment at its first meeting. We recommend that this should be immediately followed by a search for applicants for other key positions.

64 There will, inevitably, be a period between the formal establishment of the Commonwealth of Learning and its recruitment of an initial complement of regular staff. In order to support planning activity, on lines to be agreed by the Board and in consultation with the president or president-designate work can be undertaken by staff seconded by participating countries and institutions, and by the Secretariat, on a temporary basis.

65 As noted above (para 34) the Board will need to adopt staff regulations. The Secretariat is preparing a draft of these which will take appropriate account of precedents and of Canadian practice.

66 The Vancouver office of the Agency will operate under a headquarters agreement to be signed with the Government of Canada once the Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed. The Secretariat and Canadian authorities are preparing a draft and holding preliminary discussions on this with a view to the agreement's coming into effect as soon as possible after the acceptance of the Memorandum of Understanding.

67 As noted in para 58, most distance-teaching programmes in the Commonwealth make substantial use of print. Much of the work of the Commonwealth of Learning will reflect this so that implementation in so far as it is concerned with the exchange of materials will not demand heavy investment in advanced communication technologies. At the same time, a study carried out on behalf of the Canadian Department of Communications shows that electronic communication between Vancouver and some member institutions is still restricted by lack of access to facilities for electronic mail and telefax. The effective establishment of communications within the network will therefore require both some investment in equipment at the regional level and the training of staff in its use. In this connection we are pleased to note that the Canadian government has expressed its willingness to fund the purchase of some communication equipment for regional units (see para 44).

68 Detailed proposals for the Commonwealth of Learning's programme for its first year must await the establishment of the Board. In the meantime we recommend activities of two kinds in order to facilitate and expedite the Board's work. The first is to continue the preparatory studies and analysis of issues outlined in section 7 above and to make the findings of these available to the Board when constituted. The second is to advise distance-teaching institutions throughout the Commonwealth of the proposals we have made and, in due course, of the decision of governments on them so that the early plans can be informed by a wide-ranging debate on needs and opportunities to which the Commonwealth of Learning will respond.

9 BUDGET AND FINANCE

69 The Agency will maintain a central fund into which voluntary contributions from Commonwealth governments, and contributions from other organisations and agencies both public and private, will be paid. Separate funds will also be maintained, as appropriate, for specific collaborative projects to which governments, international agencies, and other public and private sector bodies may make contributions. As noted in para 34 there will be an annual budget approved by the Board from which the costs of headquarters administration, and of operations established in Vancouver and elsewhere will be met, including programmes in support of institutions.

70 The Commonwealth of Learning will need to seek funds from a variety of sources. The most important source of funds, that make its launch possible, is the funding committed by governments. Amounts already pledged are shown in table 1. In addition to these, funds have already been made available by both Cyprus and New Zealand for the current year but it is not yet possible to quantify these countries' contributions over a five-year period. It is anticipated that other Commonwealth governments will join those shown, and that the Commonwealth of Learning will be able to seek direct funding by governments beyond the initial period. With the exception of the contributions from Britain and Malta which are principally for activities in support of the Commonwealth of Learning within those countries, of contributions from Australia to support regional activities in Southern Africa and the Pacific, and of contributions in kind for accommodation and equipment from Canada, through the Federal Government and the Government of British Columbia which are part of the Canadian contribution, it is understood that these funds will be available for use by the Agency in any Commonwealth country and will be provided in convertible currency. In addition to this financial support, the Agency will be able to draw on facilities in certain Commonwealth countries without charge; Nigeria has, for example, agreed to make television services and free physical facilities available and facilities have also been offered by British Columbia, India and Malta.

71 We note that some pledged funds are entirely tied. If the Agency is to function as an effective multilateral organisation it will require substantial funds that are to the maximum extent freely usable by the Board for activities in any part of the Commonwealth. It is therefore our strong hope that in the future governments will feel able to make their contributions freely available. To enable the Agency to integrate activity financed with earmarked funds into its policies and programmes, these funds should preferably be channelled through the Agency and be under the policy control of the Board.

72 We recommend that the Secretary-General take the opportunity of our report to urge member countries that have not yet committed funds to do so.

73 The Commonwealth of Learning will need to be entrepreneurial in seeking funds from other sources in addition to this core finance from governments. Continuing sustained efforts will be needed to involve and maintain the interest and support of governments and other agencies both public and private. Sources of funding will include the following:

bilateral donors, willing to fund project activities in addition to any core funding;

multilateral agencies, including the development banks;

Table 1: Resources pledged for the Agency's first five years as at 8 June 1988

	Currency £'000	
	Earmarked Buildings & Services equipment	Freely usable
Australia	1000 a/	
Britain	1000-2000 b/	
Brunei Darussalam		3000
Canada (Federal and British Columbia governments) c/	2000	4000
Cyprus		note d/
India	note e/	1000
Malta	note f/	
New Zealand		note d/
Nigeria	note g/	1500

Notes

- a Indicative; for regional developments and subject to government approval and appropriation
- b For expenditure on information and credit transfer
- c These figures are approximations. The Canadian commitment made at Vancouver was for up to Cdn \$12m over five years, up to \$2m of which would be earmarked for the provision of communication equipment, and approximately \$2m of which would consist of an in-kind contribution from the provincial government of British Columbia of premises for the Agency's Headquarters in Vancouver. The remaining amount of up to \$8m would be made available as freely available cash to the central operational funds of the Agency, consisting of approximately \$3m from the provincial government of British Columbia, and up to \$5m from the federal government of Canada
- d Exact figure awaited; expected to be freely available
- e (i) £1m freely available
(ii) Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, would provide physical facilities for a regional unit, the value of which would be communicated in due course
- f Building and resources in Malta
- g (i) £1.5m freely available
(ii) Physical facilities for a regional centre based in Nigeria; it is expected that the value will be communicated in due course
(iii) Television facilities

the private sector especially where there are similar training needs in more than one country;

trusts and foundations.

In some instances the Agency will itself be able to raise finance from its activities, charging for its services where appropriate both within the Commonwealth and outside.

74 Regardless of the source of funding, the Agency's finances will be controlled by means of Financial Regulations. As mentioned in para 34 it will be for the Board to approve these after the Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed. They will provide for internal financial control and for audit in accordance with conventional international practice.

75 The funds shown in Table 1 will enable a useful start to be made on the work of the Commonwealth of Learning. They will permit the establishment and operation of the Vancouver headquarters and programme planning and implementation particularly at the regional level. The Canadian contribution in kind will adequately cover the initial needs for building and equipment. With the core funding available a modest range of programme activities, as described in section 7 above, can be undertaken. It will be necessary for further funds to be sought on a project basis and this will be an early task for the Agency's staff.

76 The British contribution will ensure the early development of information services. The British Government has indicated its willingness to finance work on information services, including credit recognition and transfer, at the British Open University at a level of between £1-2 million over a five-year period. This would have as its basis a letter of understanding between the Agency and the Open University setting out details of the services to be provided to the Commonwealth of Learning.

77 Britain and other countries are also ready to consider providing bilateral assistance for distance education where developing country governments see this to be a priority for aid funds.

78 In the light of the foregoing indications of resource availability, we have considered likely expenditure patterns for the first five years of operations of the Agency. On the basis of resources already pledged, excluding earmarked contributions and contributions in kind to the Agency, we envisage expenditure by the Agency of at least £9.5m in the first five-year period. In addition there may be expenditure outside the main budget on specific projects. Within the total indicated the build-up of expenditure over the initial period might be from about £1.4m in the first full year to perhaps £2.5m in the fifth year. Reflecting our concern that the profile of the headquarters should be as lean as is consistent with effectiveness over 80% of the expenditure will be for programme work including the costs of the professional staff engaged in delivering services to members of the network. The remaining expenditure on developing the necessary infrastructure will diminish as a proportion of the total as the Commonwealth of Learning develops. The total professional and managerial staff at headquarters might be in the region of 25 in the early years and the number of staff employed elsewhere will also be modest. There will also be expenditure in the regions from the Agency's budget but regional units and other activities would expect to draw funds from other sources. As additional funds become available, the scope and scale of activities funded from the Agency's budget would be increased.

APPENDIX A**DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING****I PREAMBLE**

1 Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Vancouver, in October 1987 considered the report Towards a Commonwealth of Learning submitted by an expert group chaired by Lord Briggs and agreed 'to establish a Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education, which may become the University of the Commonwealth for co-operation in distance education'.

2 This Memorandum of Understanding provides for the establishment of an institution to be called the Commonwealth of Learning, an Agency which will be an international organisation with international legal personality and which will have member-countries of the Commonwealth, through their governments, as participants.

II PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS

3 The purpose of the agency is to create and widen access to opportunities for learning, by promoting co-operation between universities, colleges and other educational institutions throughout the Commonwealth, making use of the potential offered by distance education and by the application of communication technologies to education. The agency's activities will aim to strengthen member countries' capacities to develop the human resources required for their economic and social development, and will give priority to those developmental needs to which Commonwealth co-operation can be applied. The agency will work in a flexible manner and be capable of responding effectively to changing needs. It will serve the interests of Commonwealth member countries and of the Commonwealth itself, working in co-operation with governments and other Commonwealth agencies and educational institutions and doing so in a way that is consistent with the principles that have guided the Commonwealth. In performing its functions the agency will seek to ensure the appropriateness of programmes and of distance-education techniques and technologies to the particular requirements of member countries.

4 Within this broad framework, the functions and objectives of the agency will include:

4.1 assisting the creation and development of institutional capacity in distance education in member countries;

4.2 facilitating the channelling of resources to projects and programmes in distance education;

4.3 providing information and consultancy services on any aspect of distance education including the selection of appropriate technology;

- 4.4 undertaking and supporting staff training in the techniques and management of distance education;
- 4.5 facilitating inter-institutional communication links;
- 4.6 undertaking and supporting evaluation and applied research in distance education;
- 4.7 assisting the acquisition and delivery of teaching materials and more generally facilitating access to them;
- 4.8 commissioning, and promoting the adaptation and development of teaching materials;
- 4.9 establishing and maintaining procedures for the recognition of academic credit;
- 4.10 assisting in the development of local support services to students;
- 4.11 stimulating and supporting any other activities that fall within the agency's areas of interest by such means as may be approved by the Board of Governors.

5 The agency will operate through a headquarters in Vancouver, such units in other regions of the Commonwealth as may be set up, and networks of teaching, information and research institutions.

6 In carrying out its functions the agency will respect the integrity and interests of co-operating agencies and institutions, as well as their right to work together independently of the agency.

III GOVERNANCE

7 There will be a Board of Governors which will have overall responsibility for determining the principles, policies and priorities that will guide the agency in its day-to-day activities and whose functioning will be in accordance with the following provisions.

7.1 The duties of the Board will include consideration and approval of programme priorities and of the annual work programme and budget, the making of staff regulations and financial regulations, and the appointment of the President. The Board will report both to meetings of Commonwealth Heads of Government and to those of Education Ministers.

7.2 The Board will comprise:

7.2.1 if not otherwise a member of it, the Chairman appointed by the Board

7.2.2 one member appointed by name by each of the five Commonwealth governments which have pledged the largest financial contributions to the agency or programmes approved by the Board over the forthcoming three financial years;

7.2.3 one member appointed by name by each of four Commonwealth governments as agreed by Commonwealth Education Ministers, following a principle that allows for rotation;

7.2.4 three members appointed by the Board;

7.2.5 two members appointed by the Commonwealth Secretary-General;

7.2.6 the Commonwealth Secretary-General or the Secretary-General's representative;

7.2.7 the President of the agency ex officio;

except in the case of the first Board where the Commonwealth Secretary-General will after appropriate consultation propose which four countries should be invited to make appointments to the Board under para 7.2.3 and will himself after appropriate consultation appoint the five further individual members provided for by paras 7.2.4 and 7.2.5.

7.3 In making decisions relating to appointments to the Board due regard will be paid by each appointing authority to the need for the Board to represent adequately all regions of the Commonwealth, distance education and education generally, and the business and communication sectors.

7.4 Members of the Board will be appointed for a term of three years, with one third retiring each year but initially one third of the members will be appointed for two years, one third for three years and one third for four years. Members will be eligible for reappointment for a further term but should not serve a longer consecutive period than six years. Members appointed under paras 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 may appoint alternates to represent them in their absence.

7.5 In the exercise of their responsibilities members will at all times have regard to the interests of the Commonwealth as a whole.

7.6 The Board may invite up to five persons representing governments or organisations contributing to or otherwise significantly assisting the agency's activities to participate on an advisory basis in the deliberations of the Board.

7.7 The Board will meet at least once each calendar year. Ten members will comprise a quorum.

7.8 The Board will have a Chairman who will be a person of international standing, with a term of office for three years. The Chairman will be appointed by the Board on the nomination of the Commonwealth Secretary-General made after appropriate consultation. The Chairman will be eligible for appointment for a second term of three years.

7.9 The Board may establish committees including an Executive Committee and delegate functions to them.

7.10 The Board's decisions will generally be taken by consensus or where necessary by a simple majority of members present and voting, except in respect of financial matters in which case a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting will be required. The Chairman will have an original and a casting vote.

IV ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

8 The President will be the chief executive officer of the agency and will be responsible to the Board of Governors for the administration and operations of the agency, for the implementation of its policies and programmes, and for its financial management. The President will be appointed for a fixed term not exceeding five years in the first instance. The President will appoint other members of staff in accordance with such general guidelines as the Board may from time to time determine, and having regard to the appropriateness of recruiting widely among Commonwealth countries. Appointments of senior staff will be made in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the Chairman.

9 The Canadian government will introduce such legislation as may be necessary in order to give the agency a legal personality under Canadian law and to accord to the agency and its staff the immunities and privileges as set out in the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (1948), as accepted by Canada.

10 When the prospect of activities of the agency in the territory of another Commonwealth government renders it appropriate, the agency and such government will confer with a view to such government taking steps to accord corresponding immunities and privileges in its territory to the agency and its staff.

11 The agency will be funded by voluntary contributions from Commonwealth Governments, which will to the maximum possible extent be made in such form as to be freely usable for the purposes of the Commonwealth of Learning, augmented by grants from provinces states or territories of Commonwealth countries and other appropriate agencies and donors and by income from the provision of services. The agency will also be able to seek additional funding from governments, international agencies, institutions and private sources to finance specific collaborative distance education projects. The agency will be empowered to invest and to borrow funds within such limits as the Board may from time to time prescribe, but it will not be authorised to enter into financial commitments which are not covered by firm pledges of funding.

V FINAL PROVISIONS

12 This Memorandum may be amended from time to time as agreed by Commonwealth governments upon the proposal of the Board of Governors or of a Commonwealth government.

13 Commonwealth governments will undertake a full review of the progress of the agency after it has been in operation for five years, including specific provisions in this Memorandum of Understanding, to determine whether any changes in the arrangements are considered desirable.

14 This Memorandum will come into effect immediately after Commonwealth Governments have, at a specially convened meeting of High Commissioners or their representatives, signified their approval of the Memorandum.

APPENDIX B MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

CHAIRMAN

Dr John S Daniel
President, Laurentian
University, Sudbury
Ontario, Canada

MEMBERS

REPRESENTATIVES OF MAIN DONOR COUNTRIES

Professor Malcolm Skilbeck	Australia	Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Deakin University
Dr Roger O Iredale	Britain	Chief Education Adviser, Overseas Development Administration
Hajah Misli binti Haji Awang	Brunei Darussalam	Director of Planning Research and Development, Ministry of Education
Mr Noble Power	Canada*	Vice-President, Multilateral Branch, Canadian International Development Agency
Dr Jack Newberry	Canada*	Director of Access Programs, Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, Province of British Columbia
Mr Abhimanyu Singh	India	Deputy Secretary, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development
Prof P Serracino Inglott	Malta	Rector, University of Malta
Mr W L Renwick	New Zealand	Visiting Fellow, Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington
Professor Akin Adesola	Nigeria	Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos

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Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi
National Open University

Mr Kenneth Tsekoo
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Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Education

*at the second meeting of the Group Canada was represented by:

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Canada

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Printed and published by
The Commonwealth Secretariat

May be purchased from
Commonwealth Secretariat Publications
Marlborough House
London SW1Y 5HX

ISBN 0 85092 328 X

