



## COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA, NEW DELHI

Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CEMCA Advisory Council (CAC) held on 7 December 2023 at Sheraton Hotel, New Delhi at 10:00 hrs. IST.

Attendees:

### **Commonwealth of Learning**

Prof. Asha S. Kanwar - Chairperson  
President and CEO, COL

### **Bangladesh**

Mst. Rokhsana Begum - Member

Deputy Secretary  
Scholarship & Engineering University  
Section  
Ministry of Education  
Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh

Prof. (Dr.) Syed Humayun Akhter - Member  
Vice Chancellor,  
Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh

### **India**

Mr. Mrityunjay Behera - Member  
Economic Advisor  
Department of Higher Education,  
Ministry of Education, Government of India,  
New Delhi

Prof. K. Seetharama Rao - Member  
Vice Chancellor  
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University  
Hyderabad, India

Prof. Saroj Sharma - Member  
Chairperson, National Institute of Open Schooling,  
India

## **Malaysia**

YBhg Datin Noorazah Binti Omar  
Under Secretary of International Relations Division  
Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia

Member

### **Nominated**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azidah Abu Ziden  
Director, Division of Academic Excellence  
Department of Higher Education,  
Ministry of Higher Education,  
Malaysia

## **Maldives**

Mr. Ahmed Mausoom  
Education Development Professional  
Head of Foreign Relations Section  
Ministry of Education  
Republic of Maldives

-

Member

## **Sri Lanka**

Ms. Hasini Thalagala  
Ministry of Education  
Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Foreign Agencies & External  
Affairs  
Ministry of Education, Isurupaya,  
Battaramulla, Sri Lanka

-

Member

## **CEMCA**

Dr. B. Shadrach  
Director, CEMCA

-

Member

Mr. Amit Jain  
Head, Admn. & Finance  
CEMCA

-

Secretary

Dr. Venkataraman Balaji, Vice President, COL, could not attend the meeting and sought Leave of Absence.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CEMCA Advisory Council.

## **1. Chairperson's Introductory Remarks**

The Chairperson welcomed all the CAC members: Mst. Rokhsana Begum, Ms. Hasini Thalagala, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azidah Abu Ziden, Mr. Mrityunjay Behera, Mr. Ahmed Mausoom, Prof. (Dr.) Syed Humayun Akhter, Prof. K. Seetharama Rao, Prof. Saroj Sharma, Dr. B. Shadrach and Mr. Amit Jain.

The Chairperson thanked all CAC members for their unconditional ongoing support and cooperation with CEMCA and COL under her presidency.

The Chair also shared with the CAC members that the Board of Governors, COL, has appointed Professor Peter Scott as the next President and CEO of COL. He takes up the position on 8 January 2024. Professor Scott, until recently, served as the President of Athabasca University, and many of COL and CEMCA staff have had the opportunity to meet him during PCF10. She requested the CAC members to provide the same support to the New President as given to her.

The Chair shared that in alignment with COL's Strategic Plan 2021-27, CEMCA is promoting sustainable development, economic and social inclusion, environment conservation and equitable and quality education. The six-year strategic plan, which may be revised as three-year strategic plan in future, has elements of continuity and change. CEMCA will continue to organise its work in two priority sectors: Education and Skills with Gender and Technology-enabled Learning as cross cutting initiatives to promote sustainable development. The main focus is on social inclusion, innovation, environment and capacity building. CEMCA's expertise can be used to provide value linkage and better collaboration through available international expertise in their programmes.

The Chair also emphasised that the CAC meeting may become the forum for sharing international inputs and development among the member states. She informed that CEMCA's Annual Plan and Strategic Plan are approved by the Board.

The Chair shared that the mid-term strategic evaluation of CEMCA is going on and the evaluation report will be available to all CAC members next year as evidence of CEMCA's work. This evaluation report can be a starting point for discussing the next strategic plan or recommendations for the next three/six-year strategic plan. It can also be used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses and to know what changes need to be made.

The Chair also shared the top-most priorities of COL-CEMCA as

- AI-enabled technology
- Identifying innovative ways of value addition

Regarding the funding modalities of COL-CEMCA, the Chair stated that the sources of funding are totally voluntary; they are not based on assessed contribution. Therefore, they are accountable for all the work and to the funding agencies. The country reports on the work that they delivered are duly available on COL's website and are also available to all member states as compendiums.

All members present participated in the discussion and expressed their views on the points made by the Chairperson. Following the Chair's remarks, the agenda was approved, and the items were taken up.

## **2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Advisory Council Meeting held on December 26, 2022**

All members of CAC, especially those who were present in the last meeting, confirmed the minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Advisory Council Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2022. Mr. Ahmed Mausoom, Education Development Professional, Head of Foreign Relations Section, Ministry of Education, Republic of Maldives, seconded the confirmation motion proposed by Prof. K. Seetharama Rao, Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, India.

### **3. Action Taken Report**

Director CEMCA presented the Action Taken Report and reported as under:

***Action Item No. 1: Education reforms are underway in Sri Lanka and pilot programmes of reforms are taken up in schools. Skill Development needs mediation. There is low performance of boys as compared to girls. How can we harness ODL to bridge the under performance by boys.***

CEMCA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth-National Youth Services Council, Sri Lanka, and an NGO, Together with Youth, is creating a series of courses aimed at enhancing employability skills among school leaving youth. Course modules on life skills and communication skills are due for completion in two months. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, and a local organisation, the Centre for Media and Information Literacy (CMIL), CEMCA organised an online workshop on 22-23 November 2022, providing detailed exposure to the concept of Virtual Labs as the first step towards providing online training to 10,000 youth centres in Sri Lanka.

***Action Item No. 2: There is a need for advocacy for Blended Learning as the future of Distance Education***

CEMCA has collaborated with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) to develop the National Policy on Blended Learning in Higher Education (NPBL), following the recommendation of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). CEMCA, in consultation with the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), is also working in the area of developing advocacy material on blended learning to enhance education and skill development capacities of institutions.

***Action Item No. 3: Certain NGOs are involved in promoting organic farming in certain villages. CEMCA may organise courses on these themes and on climate action. There is a need for a course on Climate Literacy.***

CEMCA has created a course curriculum on climate literacy and organic farming at the grassroots level. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) also showed interest in promoting CEMCA's work among the members of community-based organisations and through Community Radio stations. Some Agricultural Universities have shown interest in creating short term courses on the subject, such as organic farming, floriculture, hydroponics and protected cultivation, micro irrigation techniques and food processing. It is also working in the area of inclusive education through the use of technology for specially-abled children.

***Action Item No. 4: There are no courses aimed at Domestic Helpers/Workers.***

CEMCA has begun the process of developing a comprehensive multimedia course aimed at training elderly caregivers and domestic helpers, aligning with the National Competency Standard and Competency based Training Curriculum for all workers who wish to migrate to the Gulf countries for employment. It will be piloted in Sri Lanka through the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), Sri Lanka. CEMCA has also undertaken steps to adapt the course for mobile accessibility in partnership with the Home Management and Care Givers Sector Skills Council for domestic workers in Gurgaon, Haryana.

***Action Item No. 5: Focal Points of COL need to be well informed of the programmes being carried out in their respective nations.***

CEMCA has had meetings with the Focal Points (FPs) of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Maldives on a bilateral basis periodically and the response has been good in certain nations. CEMCA shall continue to engage with the FPs on a regular basis.

***Action Item No. 6: Gender Green Teacher Programme needs to be promoted within and outside India.***

COL organised a programme at NIOS involving Asian and African nations for the uptake of the Gender Green Teacher Programme during the year.

#### **4. Annual Report 2022-23 (July 22 to June 23)**

The Director, CEMCA, made a detailed presentation on the Annual Report for the year 2022-23. He briefly explained the range of activities conducted during the past one year, the ongoing programmes and collaborations for various programmes with a large number of stakeholders from various institutions, universities, CSO partners and countries in South-east Asia during the year under reporting.

The salient features of his presentation were as under:

- CEMCA, in collaboration with the AIU, entered into an agreement to develop a National Policy on Blended Learning in Higher Education in light of the recommendations of NEP 2022. AIU is a group of 1100 universities and 45,000 colleges in India.
- CEMCA has developed a two-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on 'Developing Online Courses for SWAYAM', India's national MOOC platform.
- CEMCA, in collaboration with the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, India, discussed various aspects of blended learning to enhance the quality of education and skill development, and state mechanisms to formulate the National Policy on Blended Learning for Higher Education and Institutional Blended Learning Policy in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); the role of government and apex agencies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) in implementing blended learning in higher education; and the role of agencies like CEMCA, COL and UNESCO in facilitating the adoption of blended learning in higher education.

- CEMCA collaborated with the Vidyasagar University (VU), West Bengal, India, to adopt Open Educational Resources (OER) for better teaching and learning. The approved policy was implemented by the university.
- CEMCA Supported BRAOU, Telangana, India, in creating their OER Repository on Dspace, which is functional and can be accessed at <https://oer.braou.ac.in>. All the learning resources of BRAOU will be hosted as OER on this platform.
- CEMCA collaborated with the Centre for Research and Development Policy (CRDP), Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), India, to develop a micro-course on Innovation and Entrepreneurship for schools.
- CEMCA and the Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE), Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India, developed four courses, namely, Security and Nuclear Issues in South Asia (Programme: MA in Political Science); Modern Indian English Novel: (Programme: MA in English); Biotechnological Applications in Plant Improvement (Programme: M.Sc. Botany); and Nutritional Management of Health and Fitness (Programme: M.Sc. in Dietetics and Community Nutrition Management).
- CEMCA collaborated with the Uttarakhand Open University for a “four-week MOOC on Digital Forensics”.
- The six-week MOOC on Essential Life Skills developed by CEMCA in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU), Uttar Pradesh, India, focuses on various topics such as critical thinking, problem solving, informed decision making, and social and inter-personal skills.
- CEMCA, in collaboration with CRDP, organised the pilot-testing of online, interactive micro-course on Innovation and Entrepreneurship for six months to assess its efficacy.
- CEMCA has developed a learner friendly 360 Degree Virtual Reality (VR) Educator platform that allows learners to immerse in content beyond the real world and develop their critical thinking and creativity.
- CEMCA and IT for Change, Karnataka, India, are conducting a comprehensive scoping study to assess the existing open educational practices (OEP) in three Indian state open universities: Vardhman Mahaveer Open University (VMOU) in Kota, Rajasthan; Madhya Pradesh (BHOJ) Open University (MPBOU) in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh; and Jharkhand State Open University (JSOU) in Ranchi, Jharkhand, India.
- CEMCA and SCORE Foundation, Delhi, India, collaborated to conduct a comprehensive study on ODL practices among the visually impaired individuals in India, and develop a plan for the dissemination of its significant findings.
- CEMCA works with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and educators from the secondary school to tertiary levels to increase equitable and inclusive access to skill development opportunities for all in the Asian Commonwealth countries.
- CEMCA collaborated with the National Institute of Technical Teachers’ Training and Research (NITTTR), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (MP), India, to up-skill the teachers of

Polytechnics across India to make them at par with the global standards of teaching and facilitation.

- CEMCA and Bhartiya Skill Development University (BSDU), Rajasthan, India, collaborated for the Validation of Skill Pedagogy Curriculum for Vocational Educators of Indian Universities. They have developed a 40-hour MOOC for vocational educators, designed to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and professional attitude necessary to excel in their teaching and training practice and inspire their learners for educational excellence, which was duly reviewed by an expert from Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia, for further enhancing the content.
- CEMCA and NITTTR-Bhopal, MP, India, organised a national consultation on the curriculum on 'Building Excellence in Teaching' for Diploma faculty members.
- In partnership with the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC), India, CEMCA organised two FDPs for the Computer Science and Commerce faculty members of Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU), Tamil Nadu, India.
- CEMCA collaborated with the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) to develop audio-visual modules on bamboo furniture making. These modules are tailored for virtual training sessions, targeting artisans and aspiring entrepreneurs in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The training materials are available in Sinhala, Bengali and English languages, aiming to facilitate comprehensive learning and skill development in the local community.
- In a strategic collaboration, CEMCA and the Indian Plumbing Skills Council (IPSC) produced technical video content tailored for the General Plumber Course. The videos will serve dual purpose, acting as instructional materials for training IPSC students and as valuable resources for the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme.
- CEMCA partnered with INBAR to create technical video content as OER, focusing on Bamboo Scrimber, Laminated Composites, and Value-Added Products. The initiative is geared specifically for Bamboo Entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Brunei. The comprehensive collection comprises six videos in Malay and five videos in English languages, fostering knowledge dissemination and skill development in the local bamboo industry.
- CEMCA and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Delhi, India, organised a National Consultation on Course Development for 'Improving Teaching Techniques of TVET School Teachers'
- CEMCA and TNSDC entered into an Agreement to conduct online capacity building programme for 15,000 learners through COL Scholarship programmes. These students belong to various institutions empaneled with TNSDC's Naan Mudhalvan Upskilling Platform, which is a flagship industry relevant skill enhancement initiative for the youth of Tamil Nadu to make them employable and help them in selecting a career of their choice.
- In partnership with CEMCA, GMR Varalakshmi Foundation (GMRVF), Delhi, India, successfully concluded a first-of-its-kind blended mode training programme on

agriculture.

- CEMCA is collaborating with Global Pro Sport Development (PSD), New Delhi, India, to create a MOOC on 'Developing 21st Century Skills through Sports'. The objective of the MOOC is to train physical education practitioners to use sports as a medium to develop essential 21st Century skills like problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, team building, leadership, etc. among learners.
- CEMCA has developed an Academic and Career Skills (Self-Assessment) Instrument (ACSI) for CBSE, Delhi, India, to assist students in making informed decisions regarding their educational stream and future career paths.
- CEMCA is conducting an exploratory study to analyse ways to enhance the efficacy of the Basic Cosmetology Course (NSQF-3) offered under the Craftsmen Training Scheme at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in India.
- CEMCA is collaborating with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) of Sri Lanka to develop a comprehensive course aimed at training Elderly Caregivers, aligning with the National Competency Standard and Competency-Based Training Curriculum for Caregivers (ELDER).
- To support the National Youth Service Council of Sri Lanka, CEMCA partnered with Together with Youth (TWY), Sri Lanka, to enhance the soft skills and spoken English proficiency of Sri Lankan youth, thereby enhancing their employability.
- CEMCA collaborated with Joy Gopalpur Gram Vikas Kendra (JGVK), South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India, on developing a pilot sustainable model village using skill as a driver in line with the UN SDG goals in sustainable agriculture and aquaculture.
- CEMCA partnered with CBSE in enhancing skill-focused education by creating multimedia material for Class XI Tourism Course. CEMCA is producing and filming 300 minutes of content.
- CEMCA is supporting CBSE in enriching the Fashion Design course for Class XI students by producing multimedia resources. For this purpose, CEMCA has created around 360 minutes of multimedia course content.
- CEMCA collaborated with UNESCO New Delhi and SMART (Seeking Modern Applications for Real Transformation), Delhi, India, to launch SDG Fellowship for Community Radio broadcasters. The Fellowship provided an opportunity to CR broadcasters to highlight important and under-reported grassroots stories related to the SDG goals, specifically SDG 13 - Climate Action.
- CEMCA and SMART have come together to develop a curriculum for CR broadcasters. The course would enable the CR broadcasters to prepare the grassroots communities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The curriculum developed under the programme will be pilot tested with 10 SDG Fellows.
- Under the aegis of Ministry of Ayush (MOA), Government of India, CEMCA celebrated 50-day countdown to International Yoga Day from 8 May to 21 June 2023,

in collaboration with 217 Community Radio Stations (CRS) across India. The objective was to promote yoga for improved physical and mental well-being. It is estimated that 217 CRS were able to reach approximately 20 million people within their broadcast range of 15-20 kms. The Common Yoga Protocol course was also well received by the community members. This is the fourth collaboration between MOA and CEMCA after the Immunity Enhancement Campaign of 2020-2021 and promotion of International Yoga Day 2022.

The Annual Report is (will be) available in an online folder at:

<https://www.cemca.org/annual-reports>

### **5. CEMCA's Achievement Report for 2023-24 (July to November 2023)**

Director CEMCA presented the Achievement Report of CEMCA for the current year covering the months from July to November 2023 (5 months). He explained the ongoing programmes, achievements and fresh initiatives under consideration for the future, which will have a long-term impact for the improvement of institutional capacities. The salient features are as under:

- CEMCA, in collaboration with Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University (BAOU), Gujarat, India, organised the Open University Vice-Chancellors' Forum on 4-5 August 2023, at their campus in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The overarching theme of the event was "National Education Policy-2020: Opportunities and Challenges for Open and Distance Learning Universities." The forum was graced by the presence of 14 Open University Vice Chancellors, the Vice Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), India, and several esteemed participants, including those from Malaysia, Mauritius, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates, who participated virtually. The forum included several plenary sessions and panel discussions around the theme. *The outcome of the forum was the draft version of Ahmedabad Declaration, highlighting 10 major items detailing the challenges being faced by ODL institutions in India and the best practices for adoption by them. The Ahmedabad Declaration was duly adopted by 17 Open Universities.*
- CEMCA partnered with Dr B R Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), Telangana, India, to conduct a capacity-building workshop on creating micro-credential courses that provide opportunities for lifelong learning and enhance employability.
- CEMCA and AIU, India, formed an Expert Committee with members drawn from prestigious universities and institutions from India and abroad to draft the first NPBL for higher education in India. Once the document is finalised, the next steps in this endeavor would include the formulation of a strategy and communication plan to effectively disseminate the policy among diverse stakeholders.
- CEMCA signed an MOU with Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), Assam, India to develop and share OER; create an OER repository to promote OER; promote research and development in ODL including the establishment of a research centre to carry out research in ODL teaching learning methodologies and

technologies; organise training and capacity building programmes for ODL educators and practitioners; organise training and capacity building programmes for school teachers through LMS; and plan joint conferences, seminars and workshops.

- CEMCA is collaborating with ChangeInkk Foundation, New Delhi, India, to develop a four-week online course on Mainstreaming Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) in the form of a MOOC that will be hosted on the MOOC4D platform. The MOOC aims to train teacher educators, policy makers and other stakeholders on the subject. It will develop the learning support system: AI based BOT as an assistant.
- CEMCA and National Skills Network (NSN), Telangana, India, have come together to organise the first Skillfest 2023, which was open to participants from Asian Commonwealth countries – Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, and Sri Lanka.
- CEMCA is working to develop a video edition of NEP 2020 with the Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey (SNDT) Women's University and Prof. Vasudha Kamat, Chairperson, Governing Board, Consortium of Educational Communication to provide a clear understanding of NEP 2020 to the teachers' community.
- CEMCA collaborated with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Delhi, India, as a Learning Partner during the fourteenth edition of the Global Skills Summit 2023 (GSS 2023) with the theme, 'Building Skills | Empowering Youth | Creating Future'.
- COL- CEMCA and NPBridge Solutions, Karnataka, India, collaborated to create an AI-Powered Learner Support System for the 'Skills for Work' programme on Coursera. They have successfully developed a Web-Based Chat Interface and an Intelligent Help Desk Interface. The system has been deployed and access to the Chat Interface (<https://skills.npbridge.com>) has been extended to country coordinators and their helpdesk members in Eastern Africa, South Asia, the Western Pacific, West Africa, and the Caribbean.
- Supported by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Government of India, CEMCA facilitated the compilation of Community Radio Compendium 2023. It was formally released by Mr Anurag Thakur, Honorable Minister of MIB and Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, during the two-day Regional Community Radio Sammelan (North) held at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, India. The Honorable Union Minister also released a documentary film on the Community Radio Movement in India, which was developed by CEMCA and MIB.
- CEMCA, in collaboration with UNESCO New Delhi, marked a significant milestone as it completed a decade of hosting the Community Radio Video Challenge (CRVC) Competition. This year, the competition expanded its horizons to include all forms of media, transforming into the Community Media Challenge 2023 (CMC 2023). The theme for CMC 2023 was "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" (AKAM), symbolising the celebration of freedom. Through this initiative, CEMCA aimed to showcase the talents of youth in storytelling using a variety of media formats. The competition invited students from schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions across India to participate.
- Under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Government of India, CEMCA organised a Community Radio Awareness Workshop in partnership

with Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) at Guwahati in Assam, India, on 30-31 October 2023. The primary aim of this workshop was to raise awareness about community radio, its advantages, and the process of establishing a community radio station.

- CEMCA signed an MOU on 7 August 2023 with Manav Rachna University (MRU), Haryana, India, to introduce a six-week MOOC on 'Lean Six Sigma Foundation' to all the students and faculty of the university.
- CEMCA, UNESCO New Delhi and Pro Sports Development (PSD) are creating multimedia content for imparting value-based education through sports. The specific focus of the collaboration is on utilising sports as a medium to instill 21st century skills and values such as respect, equity, and inclusion. All four modules of the course, Developing 21st Century Skills through Sports, have been developed and the process of developing multimedia content and packaging the courseware as a MOOC has started.
- CEMCA is actively involved in supporting the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) in a significant initiative. The focus of this collaboration is to assess and enhance the online and digital materials created for the training and certification of 2,50,000 Gram Rozgar Sevaks. Thirty-five modules of the digital content developed by NIRDPR were critically previewed and improvements were conveyed to the NIRDPR team with TCR marked for each module. The production team was given over a month's time to incorporate the desired changes.
- CEMCA is reviewing and repurposing 180 minutes of multimedia content originally developed for the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), Sri Lanka, and tailoring it for application in India. This MOOC is currently in the developmental phase.

The Chair expressed satisfaction and appreciation over the contents and quality of Annual Report and Achievement Report. The remarks were overwhelmingly endorsed by the members complementing the tremendous job done by the small team of CEMCA.

The report is (will be) available in an online folder at:

<https://www.cemca.org/other-reports>.

## **6. Any other Business**

The Chairperson sought members' priorities and views on the current developments in the region where CEMCA can support and add value.

- i) Mr. Mrutyunjay Behera of India appreciated the work so far done by CEMCA in the area of OER and blended learning. He suggested that CEMCA should align traditional schooling system with open universities to implement the OER policy. He suggested to collaborate with retired teacher or experts who are willing to provide their services on voluntary basis. These volunteers may be awarded with some honorarium or recognition in the society. More innovative ways like use of smart phone, online classes, etc. may be developed

and used to provide educational flexibility and improvement. The Chair, in response, shared that China is doing this by adopting University of 3<sup>rd</sup> age system. The retired teachers/persons are providing training or education to others on voluntary basis.

- ii) Prof. Saroj Sharma, Chairperson, NIOS, India, left early and did not attend the last session of CAC meeting, but shared earlier during the discussion the need to initiate more gender friendly and women-oriented education projects in partnership with organisations like NIOS. Following NEP 2020 policy, CEMCA should work towards aligning access with equality for skill enhancement, and the virtual school concept can be drafted and replicated.
- iii) Mst Rokhsana Begum of Bangladesh acknowledged that CEMCA is working with some universities and UGC for developing policies and programmes in Southeast Asia. She suggested that along with private universities, CEMCA should pay more attention towards working with public universities in Bangladesh. CEMCA should provide support in drafting the OER policy documents. Blended education for Smart Bangladesh, Smart Citizen and Smart Education system is one of the major priorities of the Bangladesh Government. CEMCA and COL may support in providing technical support in improving the educational contents; the new education policy for building structure for institutionalised job delivery through higher education; and help in generating employment through skill education. She highlighted the need for policy support in OER, blended learning and employability. However, she informed that none of the 20 universities invited to an OER workshop organised by CEMCA had developed OER policies, as expected. This indicates the need for
  - i) developing a robust Action Plan for each activity with expected outcome/impact and work backwards to plan the activities/outputs proposed and
  - ii) systematic and consistent follow-up.
- iv) Ms. Hasini Thalagala of Sri Lanka acknowledged that CEMCA is working with National Youth Service Council of Sri Lanka and some important organisations like TWY and TVEC in Sri Lanka. She shared three top priority sectors and the need of new approaches which can be introduced in Sri Lanka, such as:
  - a) Support in improving course material and capacity building in the area of foreign language courses – English, Japanese and German.
  - b) Technical support in teacher capacity building programmes for plantation sector by strengthening 863 plantation schools, and empowering teachers for ICT, Music, special education and mathematics, etc.
  - c) There is low performance of boys as compared to girls. She desired if ODL can do something in bridging the under performance by the boys. She shared that the number of these young drop outs in Grade 13 can be reduced by providing support in developing youth entrepreneurship skills through technical colleges, TVEC and the main schooling system.
  - d) Developing short-term online courses and ToT for teachers in Sri Lanka.

- e) Support in developing course material for special education of disabled peoples.
- v) Prof. (Dr.) Humayun Akhter, Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Open University, pointed out that Bangladesh has strongly adopted Blended Learning. He shared that in Dhaka University, 20-30 percent lectures are delivered in blended learning and online mode. The Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the World Bank, is working towards getting 15 million drop-out students employed. Licencing is a very slow process in Bangladesh, which needs to be implemented more widely. He also shared that in Bangladesh, there are two types of education – formal education and non-formal education. He further stated that there should be more initiatives towards developing livelihood courses, and blended learning could be made more attractive by incorporating animation, ChatGPT, new technology and special trainings.
- vi) Mr. Ahmed Mausoom of Maldives shared that they have expertise in the area of tourism and fishery, which can be used if needed. He requested COL/CEMCA’s regular support for skills development and training for teacher educators. Colleagues may consider resurrecting the past project with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore, to organise joint training programmes for teacher training as well as skills development, where the best practices can provide useful models for other countries to emulate. He requested to develop courses and train experts to address dyslexia related language difficulty in learners, short online refresher courses, teacher’s capacity building on blended learning, etc. He emphasised on developing vocational training courses for traditional schools to bring back school drop-outs in the age group of 10-18 years.
- vii) Prof. K. Seetharama Rao, Vice Chancellor, Dr. BRAOU, Hyderabad, India, pointed out the need to develop course material for girls living in villages in the area of agriculture, horticulture, food processing, etc. He suggested that courses need to be developed for special education for visually impaired persons through blended learning. He suggested better use of new technology like ChatGPT, for creating AI enabled training modules, introduction of short-term certificate online as well as off-line courses on parenting and care-giving courses, nutritional food training courses and many more non-formal courses with a minimum or zero fees. He also suggested to develop virtual labs, credit transfer guideline framework, and work with ITIs of rural areas for drop-out students.
- viii) Dr. Azidah Abu Ziden of Malaysia shared the establishment of OER policy, and their target to achieve 75 percent blended learning implementation by 2025. The contents of inclusive open learning textbooks, ODL guidelines establishment and micro credentials is adopted in the universities in Malaysia.

She also shared that blended learning is applicable only in public universities, therefore, she requested CEMCA's focus and support in capacity building of school teachers/sectors, which are less well-resourced for the capacity building of teachers in blended learning and blended learning implementation at school level. She also showed interest in Clause 10 of Ahmedabad Declaration on blended learning framework for Malaysia and requested CEMCA's support in this regard. She also shared that their expertise in the area of blended learning and OER can be used by COL CEMCA if needed.

## **7. Vote of Thanks**

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by the Head, Admn. & Finance who thanked the Chair and the members for their participation, valuable input, and rich contribution to the deliberations.