

AGENDA ITEM 3 - Annual Report 2003

1) Introduction

At the beginning of January 2003, the Association's membership stood at 63 members (33 Full members, 29 Associate members and 1 Individual member).

At the 18th Executive Board Meeting, the following applications were received as a Full membership:

- Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University, India
- Malaysia Open University, Malaysia
- Tamilnadu Open University, India

All the institutional applications were processed by the circulation and approved to begin their memberships as of on 1 January, 2004.

2) Personnel Changes in the Executive Committee

During this year, the following personnel changes occurred in the membership of the Executive Committee due to retirement of member institutions.

The following members are retired:

- a) Prof. S. W. Tam (OUHK)
- b) Prof. Tong-In Wongsothorn (STOU)

Their places on the EB were taken up by:

- a) Prof. John C. Y. Leong (OUHK)
- b) Prof. Pratya Vesarach (STOU)

3) AAOU 2003 Annual Conference

The 17th Annual Conference was successfully hosted by Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) from 12 to 14 November 2003 at the Siam City Hotel under the theme '*Networking and Partnership for Strengthening Collaboration in Open and Distance Education*'.

A total of 310 delegates from 26 countries attended the conference. Prof. Fumihiko Shinohara, the Program Specialist in Higher Education and ICT for Education, APEID,

UNESCO and Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan, the President of the COL conducted Opening Ceremony while the closing ceremony was officiated by Prof. Tong-In Wongsothorn, Chairman of the Organizing Committee and President of STOU. The AAOU Award of Meritorious Service for the year 2003 was awarded to Prof. Ram Takwale, the Former President of AAOU and the Vice Chancellor for IGNOU and Pune University. His contributions to an improvement of the quality in open and distance education have resulted in considerable advances in this field throughout Asia.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Wichit Srisa-an (founding President of AAOU, AUAP), Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan (President and Chief Executive Officer, The Commonwealth of Learning), Prof. Michael W. Churton (Director of Distance Learning, University of South Florida) and Prof. Paul Bacsich (Director of Special Projects at UK eUniversities).

In addition, a number of pre-conference workshops and a meeting with the President and Secretary-General of the AAOU were also organized. Also there are 73 oral and 5 poster presentation were scheduled. Attendance was satisfactory and participants were able to develop a better understanding on the working of the Association.

In keeping with the improving standard of AAOU Conferences, there were many presentations of good quality. The Best Paper prize was awarded to Wei-yuan Zhang, Research Fellow, The Open University of Hong Kong and Lixun Wang, Lecturer, The Hong Kong Institute of Education. Their paper was titled: *'Global Collaboration in the Development of an Online Learning Environment Scale: Experiences from the OUHK'*.

We wish to record our thanks to the following people who served on the Selected Committee.

- AAOU Award of Meritorious Services

Chairman:

Dr. Felix Librero (The University of the Philippines Open University, Philippines)

Members:

Dr. TAM Sheung-Wai (The Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

Dr. Wang Yibing (Shanghai TV University, UNESCO)

- Best Paper Award

Chairman:

Dr. Atwi Suparman (Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia)

Members:

Dr. Mark Bullen (University of British Columbia, Canada)

Dr. Somprasong Withayagiat (STOU, Thailand)

AAOU Secretariat deeply thanks to the members of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open

University (STOU) for their hospitality and efforts for hosting the AAOU Conference.

4) Sponsorship for AAOU 2003

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO-PROAP provided grants of CN\$10,000 and US\$5,000 respectively. Most of these funds were used with the support to as many delegates from developing countries as possible. The participants who received sponsorship are as follow:

4.1) COL Awards

- Dr. Darshana P. Sharma (Sr. Lecturer in Education)
University of Jammu, India
- Dr. Jagadeesha (Registra, Evaluation)
Karnataka State Open University, India
- Prof. Madhulika Kaushik
Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
- Mrs. Rucha Gujar (Lecturer School of Continuing Education)
Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, India
- Dr. Daing Zaidah Ibrahim (Senior Lecturer)
Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia
- Ms. Ananya Laboni (Teacher of Open School)
Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh
- Dr. Shanthi de Silva (Department of Agriculture and Plantation Engineering)
The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
- Mr. V. V. Moorthy (Computer Science and Information Technology Programme)
Singapore Institute of Management, Singapore
- Mrs. Fathimath Thoufeega (Assistant Lecture)
Central for Open Learning, Maldives
- Ms. Lilian Kek Siew Yek (Lecturer, Faculty of Business and Management)
Open University of Malaysia, Malaysia

4.2) UNESCO-PROAP Awards

- Ms. Tan Ly Huong (Chief of Distance Learning Office Teacher Training
Department)
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Cambodia
- Assoc. Prof. Li Zhaoming (Vice-President)
Yunnan Radio & TV University, China
- Father John Bonato (Acting Director)
The University of The South pacific, Fiji
- Mr. Saysamone Prasonexay
National University of Laos, Lao PDR
- Prof. Dr. Nguyen Kim Truy (President)

- Hanoi Open University, Vietnam
- Prof. Dr. Mahendra Singh (Rector)
Tribhuvan University, Nepal
- Dr Thein Myint (Director-General)
Department of Higher Education, Myanmar

(By the 17th AAOU Conference Organizing Committee)

5) Inter-University Staff Exchange Scheme

For the year 2003, a total of five members have joined the scheme: Open University of Sri Lanka, Universitas Terbuka, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Korea National Open University, China Central Radio & TV University and Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Open University.

We are confident that each of participators grew personally and professionally through this opportunity and as they return to their positions of responsibility they will apply the knowledge gained from this valuable experience. We also thank the host institution for the support and we hope this program would continue to encourage more members to be contributors for exchange ideas, experience and practices for the better relationship.

6) Conclusion

The year 2003 was a reasonably eventful and fruitful year. The Secretary-General wishes to thanks all the Executive Board and General Board members for the generous assistance and support. I also would like to thank to Dato' Prof. Dr Gajaraj Dhanarajan (former president of COL) as well as Prof. Wang WiBing (UNESCO-PROAP) for their sustained support of AAOU's annual activities throughout the whole year.

The Board is requested to consider and adopt this report.