



AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (ACDE)
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2ND ACDE CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY: 8 – 12 JULY 2007, LAGOS, NIGERIA

WELCOME NOTE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON (ACDE EXECUTIVE BOARD)

The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), established just three years ago as a continental educational organization comprising African universities and other higher education institutions, that are providers of and are committed to expanding access to quality education and training through Open and Distance Learning, is very pleased to announce and welcome you to the 2nd ACDE Conference and General Assembly to be hosted by the National Open University of Nigeria, in Lagos. As a unifying body of distance education providers in Africa, our primary goal and mandate as ACDE is to promote management, leadership, research, policy and quality in open and distance learning, through capacity enhancement, strategic networking as well as policy development and advocacy. Conferences provide one of the best opportunities for executing such mandate and facilitating attainment of such goals. It is in the light of this that at the ACDE inaugural Conference and General Assembly held in August 2005 at UNISA, attended by over 250 delegates from Africa and beyond including 10 African Ministers of Education and 25 Vice Chancellors, it was decided that the ACDE Conference and General Assembly becomes a permanent tri-annual feature.

The 2nd ACDE Conference and General Assembly is unique in four key ways. First, it is the second major international event under the aegis of the current ACDE Executive Board which was elected at the 1st General Assembly and given a clear mandate of 3 years to nurture ACDE into a reputable continental Open and Distance Learning organization. Second, it takes place against the context in which the ACDE Executive Board had been tasked with the immense task of translating the Tshwane Manifesto on Distance Education in Africa, as adopted at the inaugural Conference and General Assembly, into a Plan of Action to be implemented and reported on at the next General Assembly. Third, it is mirrored by high levels of expectations from ACDE members, guarded optimism from potential partners, latent hope among African governments that solutions for meeting the demands of access to higher education are in sight, and growing recognition as well as pledges of support for ACDE by key role players in Africa and abroad. Fourth, it not only builds on and endeavours

to exceed the very high level of organization, participation and contribution that has already been set by inaugural Conference and General Assembly, but also marks a transitional phase of ACDE from planning and consolidation to active engagement at continental and global levels.

I therefore see this Conference and General Assembly as a unique opportunity to African scholars, policy makers, ODL practitioners and researchers, the international ODL community, development agencies and other stakeholders to make major contributions toward illuminating the intricate challenges and opportunities of ODL in fulfilling global development expectations and meeting Africa's sustainable development needs.

We look forward to meeting you all at the 2nd ACDE Conference and General Assembly.

Prof. N. Barney Pityana

Chairman, ACDE Executive Board

(Vice Chancellor & Principal, University of South Africa – UNISA)