



PRESS RELEASE

Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning returns to Africa

Botswana Open University mandated by, and representing the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) are pleased to announce that they will co-host the Eleventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF11) in Gaborone, Botswana in the latter half of 2025.

COL organises triennial Pan-Commonwealth Forums on Open Learning in different parts of the Commonwealth in partnership with key institutions. This will be the third Pan-Commonwealth Forum to take place in Africa with the two earlier editions held in South Africa (2002) and Nigeria (2013). The COL President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar, said about this Conference,

“On behalf of COL, we are delighted to partner with both the Botswana Ministry of Education and Skills Development and Botswana Open University in hosting the 11th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Gaborone. We look forward to returning to Africa and helping to bring so many advocates for open learning together under one roof.”

Our own Minister of Education and Skills Development, Honourable Dr Douglas Letsholathebe, noted, that “The opportunity to co-host the 11th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Gaborone, Botswana with COL, our long-time partner, is a very welcome development indeed for both the Ministry and the Government of Botswana. We look forward to working with COL through the Botswana Open University, and to welcoming PCF11 and its participants to Gaborone and other parts of Botswana. We thank COL for giving us this opportunity; as well as the BOU Leadership for their input in ensuring that the event becomes a reality. We shall provide the support required to ensure that PCF11 is a resounding success.”

The Acting Vice Chancellor of BOU, Professor Kgomotso Moahi also had this to say about this very out of the ordinary opportunity;

“The Botswana Open University is indeed honoured to be given the opportunity to implement the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Skills Development and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to co-host the PCF11. We look forward to working with COL to ensure that this gathering of open learning advocates under one roof in Botswana is every bit as successful and fruitful as other previous fora have been.”

The Forum is one of the world’s key events in open, distance and technology-enabled learning, attracting hundreds of delegates from across the Commonwealth and beyond. PCF11 will be offered as a hybrid event with options to attend in person and virtually where this model was well-received at PCF10 held in Calgary, Canada in September 2022.

The programme is intended to expand our understanding of open education and is designed to address online, flexible, open and distance learning through widening educational access and by advancing the social and economic development of communities and nations. The Forum’s focus will be on topics relating to, and participation by, societies in developing countries.

Since 1999, the Forum has been held in Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Jamaica, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa and the UK.

About COL

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) was created by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1987 to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. Headquartered in Canada, COL is the world’s only intergovernmental organisation solely concerned with the promotion and development of distance education and open learning.

About BOU

BOU is a result of the transformation of Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) to an open university. The institution develops, and offers Open Schooling (secondary school level) and university-level programmes to extend education and training using open and distance learning methods on a national scale.

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