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## Thiruvananthapuram Declaration

Adopted by the International Meet on Transnational Education, on 5 January 2014

*The Kerala State Higher Education Council,*

The Kerala State Higher Education Council organized an International Meet on Transnational Education in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, between 3-5 January, 2014, which brought together over 100 academicians and academic policy makers from India, Afghanistan, France, Germany, Nepal, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Kenya and the United Nations.

This group, having debated various aspects relating to transnational education from a global, national and local point of view in 11 separate sessions over 3 days, have agreed to issue the following Declaration as the consolidated outcome of the International Meet.

The Thiruvananthapuram International Meet on Transnational Education,

*Acknowledging* the potential role that transnational education can play in making quality higher education available to those desirous of improving their knowledge across the world without restrictions of national boundaries,

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*Noting* the explosive growth of the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) and associated infrastructure, which are transforming the way educational content is delivered across boundaries,

*Recognizing* the imperative to shape a strategy for higher education in Kerala in the light of international experience to catch up with the education revolution taking place around the globe,

*Acknowledging* the fact that the new trends in transnational education also has the potential to affect the capacity and legitimacy of national educational institutions and educational policy regimes,

*Noting* the fact that currently there is no global framework which facilitates or governs transnational education and other related issues including quality control,

*Expressing concern* that the national academic governance regime is currently inadequate to govern the complex nature of technology-enabled quality education,

*Taking into account* that there are a number of global processes, such as the discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and the follow-up discussions on the education for sustainable development that are currently ongoing,

*Noting* that a number of Indian universities have already taken the initiative to establish International Branch Campuses in other countries,

*Recalling* that UNESCO has in 2005 issued Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross Border Education,

*Acknowledging* that developing countries, including India, have a number of structural inadequacies in areas such as language proficiency and last mile connectivity, which inhibit them from taking full advantage of online education,

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*Taking into account* that KSHEC has identified infrastructure, use of technology, teachers' training, research, autonomy and internationalization as areas for immediate attention in shaping a "Higher Education 2.0" for the twenty-first century,

*Noting* that the Government of Kerala has constituted an International Relations Group (IRG) to promote cooperation between the Universities in Kerala and foreign Universities,

*Acknowledging* that KSHEC is currently engaged in framing an IT@Colleges Programme to improve connectivity in colleges,

*Noting with appreciation* the initiative taken by KSHEC to call a timely International Meet on Transnational Education, which provided a platform for all participants to understand and deliberate on the opportunities and challenges posed by technology-enabled transnational education,

*Recognizing* the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with focus on education, training and networking, including South South collaboration,

*Requests,*

1. *The student community across the world* to urgently take note of the rapidly changing scenario of technology-enabled higher education and new trends in transnational education and to supplement their learning opportunities regardless of their country, language, age and educational background;

2. *The teaching community across the world* to proactively consider the opportunities and challenges posed by technology-enabled transnational education and harness the potential to supplement and improve their own teaching approaches but also contribute to global learning;

3. *The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* to organize a meeting of the Member States to discuss the formulation of a global policy regime, including an international convention on open

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education, which will harness the potential benefits of technologically enhanced transnational education for all Member States;

4. *Academic policy makers in all countries*, particularly the University Grants Commission in India, to urgently take note of the rapidly evolving scenarios of technology-enabled transnational education, such as MOOC, and formulate national policy regimes, including on quality control, which will ensure that the positive effects of this new trend are maximized;

5. *Universities and other academic institutions around the world*, including those in the developing world, to evaluate the new technologies of course delivery being promoted by transnational education with a view to harness the positive features of the new development to improve academic quality in their institution;

6. *Government and other regulatory bodies* to provide flexibility to academic institutions to engage in curriculum development, pedagogy and international collaboration;

7. *Countries around the world* to factor in the opportunities and challenges provided by transnational education in the discussing the follow-up to the Education for Sustainable Development decade (2014) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) which will most certainly have significant educational components;

8. *Universities and Private Sector Organisations* to work together to consider the changes happening in the academic regime, in particular, technology-enabled transnational education, could be harnessed to create a better trained workforce;

9. *Government of India* to establish a working group of academicians to review the implications of the new opportunities in transnational education and understand what the key constraints are for leveraging to improve access and quality of higher education in India;

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10. *Government of India* to consider establishing a national online platform for delivering massive open online courses including in National Languages which will not only increase access of our students to best of our education but also train out universities to familiarize with such technologies;

11. *Government of India* to create policy regime to attract foreign students, including students from the Indian Diaspora, to study in Indian universities and academic institutions;

12. *National academic administrators, such as UGC and AICTE*, to establish a system of credit transfer, similar to the European Credit Transfer System, which will enable increased mobility of students nationally;

13. *Universities and Engineering Colleges*, to consider the potential of MOOC and flipped classrooms to supplement the current training approaches especially in topics where there is severe shortage of qualified faculty;

14. *Private sector in India* to collectively consider how opportunities of transnational education can be leveraged to provide continuous learning opportunities for their employees as is already practiced by many Multi National Corporations (MNCs);

15. *Government of Kerala* to establish a committee, including representatives from academics, private sector and the Malayalee Diaspora, to review the opportunities created by the recent changes introduced by the Government of India on allowing International Branch Campuses;

16. *Director of Technical Education (Kerala)* to conduct a study of the high failure rate of students in engineering programme to see if it could be partly addressed by the opportunities offered by technologically enhanced learning;

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17. *Kerala State Higher Education Council* to conduct a series of road-shows on Transnational Education across Kerala to increase awareness about its opportunities among academic decision makers, teachers, students and private sector actors in Kerala;

18. *Kerala State Higher Education Council, along with Malayalam and Sanskrit Universities* to review what are the potential for developing and delivering Niche Open Online Courses (NOOCs) on global platforms such as edX and Coursera in niche areas;

19. *Kerala State Higher Education Council* to establish an online community of practitioners, including those who attended the Thiruvananthapuram International Meet of Transnational Education so that the dialogue and information exchange could continue;

20. *The private sector educational providers in Kerala* to leverage Kerala's reputation as a friendly and economical global tourist destination to market their capacity to deliver quality higher education at affordable costs across the developing world in order to attract more international students to come to Kerala and increase diversity in classrooms;

21. *Kerala State Higher Education Council* to establish a Committee of Experts to study the possibility of recommending to the Government of Kerala to permit private universities in Kerala to enhance direct investment in the higher education sector;

22. *Requests the education stake holders* to make full use of the Academic Journal of the Kerala State Higher Education Council 'Higher Education for the Future' which was released at the meet;

23. *Requests the Government of Kerala* to recognize and enforce governmental regulations for ensuring social and economic justice and making quality TNE accessible to the marginalized;

24. *Requests* that the implementation of MOOC should be done by considering the students with special needs;

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25. *Requests a feasible financial model to generate additional resources for further growth of off-campus institutions and to take up measures to improve the quality of the curriculum;*

26. *The United Nations Environment Programme to promote South-South collaboration through the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), and solicit the active participation of Universities, including those from Kerela, on transnational education and training on sustainable developments issues;*

27. *The United Nations Environment Programme to share the Thiruvananthapuram Declaration on Transnational Education at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development commemorating the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-14, which will be convened in Nagoya, Japan during 10-12 November 2014.*

*The participants of the International Meet on Transnational Education further resolves,*

*To continue the discussions individually in coming days in their respective countries, academic forums and educational institutions they represent, to harness the potential of transnational education;*

*To explore opportunities to collectively come together in 2015 at another venue to continue the discussion, including increased participation from the providers of transnational education;*

*To promote, in their respective countries and sphere of influence, the relevant conclusions from the Thiruvananthapuram Declaration on Transnational Education.*

*The participants of the International Meet on Transnational Education further requests,*

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the Kerala State Higher Education Council, the hosts of the International Meet on Transnational Education to widely publicize the Thiruvananthapuram Declaration on Transnational Education so that students, teachers, academic policy makers and other stakeholders of higher education can use it as a basic document to advocate and promote transnational education.

*The participants of the International Meet on Transnational Education express appreciation to the Kerala State Higher Education Council for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality.*

Issued in Thiruvananthapuram, on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2014