COL orchestrated sessions

Please complete the following proforma as far as possible and return to
pcf5@london.ac.uk by 10th March 2008.

Title of session:
Where have all the flowers gone?

Name of COL Staff Leader/s:
Professor Asha Kanwar, Vice President & Programme Director

Chair or leader of session (if different from 2)
with position and title
Sir John Daniel, President & CEO

Length of session required
90 minutes

Names of other planned contributors:
Janet Jenkins (ODL Consultant)
*Christine von Prümmer (Senior Researcher, Centre for the Development of Distance
        Education at FernUniversität (Germany)*
Rekha Sharma Sen & Pema Samdup (IGNOU)*

**the IGNOU paper is being jointly written by both women, although only one will
present. We will advise you shortly which one is available to attend PCF5.*

Equipment/computer access required (other than standard PowerPoint etc)
None (other than standard PowerPoint)

Ideal lay out of room
Formal panel presentation

Hoped for numbers of participants

Other information
N/A

Revised abstract for web site and printed programme (max 300 words)

Data indicates that women prefer open and distance learning (ODL) as a means of study. In South Africa, women make up 61% of distance education students compared with 53% of contact institutions. In India, 35% of distance students are women compared with 29% in contact institutions. From the mid-1980's, there was an interest in addressing the invisibility of gender in ODL research and publications and ensuring that ODL was women-friendly in terms of language, content, pedagogy and logistics. By early 1990, there was a small but steady stream of publications, conferences and workshops that addressed how ODL impacts on women learners including research on women and ICTs to help policy makers and practitioners understand and address the barriers contributing to the gender divide.

Since the late 1990's, however, there has been a tapering off of these initiatives. What has happened to these initiatives? Have they been overtaken by a larger interest in technology? Are there no further issues related to women that need to be addressed? Have we achieved what we set out to achieve? Or have these concerns been mainstreamed and no longer need focused attention? What is the situation today? How are the current issues and context different from the previous two decades? Have the issues changed? Or have ideas about the implementation changed? What more needs to be done?

The panel presenters will address these challenges. Workshop participants will be invited to explore the broader social implications of these trends, identify strategies and make recommendations on possible new initiatives and interventions.