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Envisioning Education Beyond 2015
Asia-Pacific Regional Perspectives

APREC

Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference

Bangkok, Thailand, 6–8 August 2014

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Foreword

Since the year 2000, the international community has worked tirelessly to improve education development outcomes the world over. For nearly 15 years, our efforts have been guided by the Education for All (EFA) goals established in Dakar, Senegal. The deadline for these goals, however, is fast approaching and we stand now at a critical juncture in the history of education development.

Indeed, the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference (APREC), held in Bangkok from 6 to 8 August 2014, occurred with little over 500 days remaining before the deadline for the EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As participants deliberated on the future of education in the region, we were reminded of our burning obligation; we should not – and we will not – overlook the major challenges still facing the achievement of the EFA goals in the count down to 2015 and the tight deadline that remains for us to deliver on these commitments.

APREC provided a critical regional platform to shape the future of education based on our collective experiences in EFA. While deliberations at this conference have emphasized the important role of national governments in delivering on their education development commitments, it must also be stressed that education is no longer solely a national agenda. In our rapidly changing world, globalizing economies and technological advances have brought us closer. The hard contents of this report, a summary of discussions throughout APREC, together with the Bangkok Statement which reflects our collective vision for the future of education, demonstrate this fact – education development is increasingly our collective responsibility.

During this conference, I have been pleased to see participants reflect on development changes and review carefully the seven targets proposed by the Muscat Agreement, taking into account the sustainable development goals, as proposed by the Open Working Group. We have witnessed an enhanced focus on developing a universal agenda that serves the needs and priorities of both developed and developing nations, one that accommodates diversity in aspirations and governance structures. Discussions have reflected the importance of equity and inclusion and the inexorable expansion of basic education across the region. We have focused on strengthening lifelong learning approaches to education, on promoting the holistic development of learners, on ensuring gender equality and on addressing all forms of discrimination in and through education.

I congratulate all participants of this important conference for their active engagement and for their careful deliberations which, given the size and significance of the Asia-Pacific region, will no doubt help inform the structuring of the global education agenda post-2015.

Lastly, I extend my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Education of Thailand for graciously hosting this important event, and to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan, the Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea, and UNICEF for their continued support. Together with all countries of the region and all our development partners, may we continue this important collaboration to help improve the lives of all people through education.

Gwang-Jo Kim
Director
UNESCO Bangkok

Acronyms

AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
APCEIU	Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding
APREC	Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
LSE	Lower Secondary Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NFE	Non-Formal Education
OWG	Open Working Group
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Upper Secondary Education
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

By the time this report is published, less than 400 days will remain before the deadline for the Education for All (EFA) goals, goals that have fundamentally shaped international education development efforts since the year 2000. In light of this impending deadline, regional high-level meetings and stakeholder consultations on the future of education development have occurred across all regions of the world. UNESCO Member States, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, have also conducted a critical review of Education for All (EFA) progress at the national level, taking stock of achievements and lessons learned so as to help inform a future education development agenda.

In light of these reviews, what have we achieved here in the Asia-Pacific region? In transforming education for the future, where should we be heading? To implement the future education agenda, how should we proceed? And, as representatives of the uniquely diverse Asia-Pacific region, what expectations and aspirations do we hold for the future of education? These crucial questions united education ministers, high-level officials, representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), development partners and academia in discussions on issues, challenges and priorities for education beyond 2015, as part of the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference (APREC), 6–8 August, 2014.

This report provides a thorough account of the discussions and deliberations that led to the construction of the Asia-Pacific Statement on Education Beyond 2015 (Bangkok Statement), the outcome document of this historic event. Participants reviewed in fine detail EFA progress across the Asia-Pacific region and debated key thematic areas of basic education, skills and competencies, global citizenship education, education for sustainable development, teachers, governance and finance. Participants also looked into implementation strategies, and education ministers from across the region shared their views on remaining challenges, future priorities and strategies for education beyond 2015.

In reviewing EFA progress and achievements, countries acknowledged that remarkable success has been made toward the EFA goals, especially EFA Goal 2 on universal primary education, and EFA Goal 5 on gender equality. Across the region, enrolment rates in primary education have increased over time with marked improvements in access to education. Likewise, gender parity gaps have been reduced in many countries, with many having reached parity. Nonetheless, significant challenges remain in EFA Goals 3, 4 and 6 on skills development, literacy and quality education respectively. Progress towards the EFA Goal 1 on early childhood care and education has been mixed across the region.

A review of EFA achievements allowed for the drawing forth of important reflections in key thematic areas and possible implementation strategies as part of the future education development agenda. Major priorities emerging from discussions are captured below and are also reflected in the Bangkok Statement included as an Annex to this report.

Regional Priorities and Strategies for Education Post-2015

Achieving lifelong learning for all – Equitable and inclusive access to quality learning should be ensured for all – children, youth and adults – at all levels of education, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to tertiary education, in both formal and non-formal settings. Throughout the APREC proceedings, it was acknowledged that the region still faces challenges in the areas of access, participation and inclusion in education. To this end, the region recommended that the post-2015

education agenda continue to push for improved access to and retention in education, whilst also going beyond gender parity to ensure greater gender equality. It was also agreed that every effort should be made to reach marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Participants from several countries reflected on the need for stronger investment into ECCE as the foundation for learning and development, and simultaneously, on the need for ensuring completion of primary and secondary education, including via alternative learning pathways.

Ensuring educational equity and equality – Participants committed to addressing all forms of marginalization, disparities and inequalities, especially gender inequality, in access to education and learning processes and outcomes, including in conflict and crisis situations. Across the region, some of the bottlenecks to school access, completion and learning achievement include household poverty, remoteness, disability, marginalization based on ethnicity and/or caste, conflicts and natural disasters. Throughout the Ministerial Roundtable discussions, a particularly strong focus was placed on the importance of addressing the causes of marginalization that continue to inhibit equity and equality in education across the region.

Providing the necessary skills and competencies for life and work – Participants agreed that all learners should acquire relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for decent work and entrepreneurship, especially in light of socio-economic and demographic transformations. Through discussions on skills and competencies, participants acknowledged that given the multivariate skills required in the 21st Century – foundational, specialized and transversal – it is clear that there must be an integrated approach to skills development across the education policy and curriculum frameworks. Given the multivariate threats to peace and security that continue to plague our planet, a particular focus on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was also seen to be important.

Improving the quality of learning and teaching – Participants from the region agreed that the quality of learning should be considered a major priority across the region, and that teachers in both formal and non-formal educational settings were central to ensuring high quality of education and learning. To this end, participants recommended enhanced support to teachers and teaching, including via professional development, improving teaching and learning environments and the greater – and more effective – integration of ICTs in education. These sentiments were reflected in almost all statements by education ministers and their representatives during the APREC Ministerial Roundtable. Further, a number of countries expressed the importance of 'holistic learning', and a great number of countries recognized that improving teacher education institutions would be paramount to improving the quality of learning and learning outcomes. At the same time, to help maintain well-qualified and skilled teachers in the profession, and to promote innovation and excellence, teacher autonomy and participation in decision-making were considered important motivational factors.

The strengthening of education governance and financing – Tackling the multidimensional challenges affecting education development requires a multivariate response and is, thus, the collective responsibility of all stakeholders. Ultimately, however, participants acknowledged that national governments remain the primary duty-bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education. More specifically, participants recommended that governments should not only improve and ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency of education management systems, but governments should also ensure the enforcement and implementation of legislation, and utilize monitoring and evaluation systems to address intra- and inter-country inequalities. In this

context, the need for ECCE regulation and legal frameworks was raised especially given the increasing privatization of ECCE services occurring across the region.

Strengthened Regional Partnerships – The 'lifelong learning perspective,' which has been strongly emphasized, not only within the context of APREC, but in the broader international debate around the future of education, underscores the critical need to ensure coordination and partnership, not just between different education levels and departments, but across different ministries and sectors. Participants requested UNESCO, with the support of UNICEF, the other EFA co-convening agencies, civil society, and other international and regional partners, to continue leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda, and the development of a corresponding Framework for Action. Given the diversity and dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region, it was agreed that enhanced subregional collaboration is especially important to the strengthening of education development outcomes across all countries.

While these recommendations are reflected in the Bangkok Statement (see Annex IA), additional commentary included in Annex IB reflects the multifaceted and complex debates surrounding the development of these priorities and strategies for the region. This report provides a detailed overview of the discussions and deliberations made over the course of the three-day conference. As such, it provides a historical account of education development achievements, reflections on future directions, approaches to implementation and regional voices at this critical turning point in the history of education development. It is hoped that this report also pays tribute to the diverse perspectives that drive education development in our region, perspectives that will undoubtedly continue to shape development outcomes as we move now toward 2030 and beyond.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific region stretches across a vast geographical area, rich with history, and diverse in cultures with 3500 languages spoken. Approximately 4.3 billion people – more than half of the world's population – call the Asia-Pacific region home. Since 2000, the Asia-Pacific region has seen remarkable development by measure of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in reducing poverty. Across the region, we have witnessed steady growth as labour markets have become increasingly integrated. Countries of the region contribute more than one-third of global GDP. According to the United Nations' World Youth Report 2013, the region is also home to the largest share of the world's youth population at approximately 60 per cent. Since 2000, the Asia-Pacific region has experienced more substantive natural disasters than any other region in the world. Clearly, Asia and the Pacific is an enormously diverse region facing enormously diverse challenges.

Since 2000, the Education for All (EFA) Goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have framed and inspired education development efforts across the world. Now that the 2015 deadline for these global development commitments is fast approaching, the United Nations, together with national governments, development partners, CSOs and NGOs have looked to both accelerate efforts toward achieving these goals and mobilize the international community to help define relevant development goals post-2015. So what have we, here in the Asia-Pacific region, learned as a result of the national EFA reviews and as a result of regional and international consultations? While regional and national priorities differ, there is a general consensus around the importance of shifting our understanding of education away from something that occurs only within a certain period of one's life and only within the bounds of certain buildings. Rather, recognition that 'lifelong learning' is needed and also possible is gaining universal appeal. Likewise, improving access, equity and equality in education for all at all levels of education (from early childhood care and education to higher education and adult learning) and across formal, non-formal and informal modalities is increasingly recognized. Indeed, the UNESCO General Conference of November 2013 committed the organization to an overarching goal of education based upon the key principles of access, equity and quality taken from the perspective of lifelong learning.

In this context, the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference (APREC), held between 6–8 August 2014, brought together education ministers, high-level officials, experts and representatives of CSOs, development partners and academia to discuss issues, challenges and priorities for education beyond 2015 from a uniquely Asia-Pacific angle. Discussions involved some debate around the seven targets proposed by the Muscat Agreement, an agreement developed as a result of the recent Global Education for All meeting in Muscat, Oman (12–4 May 2014), as well as the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations Open Working Group on Sustainable Development. Two key objectives guided discussion throughout:

- Review regional progress in education, in particular EFA, yield lessons learned for the future, and examine persisting and emerging issues, challenges and priorities for education beyond 2015; and

- Develop and agree on regional recommendations for the post-2015 global education and development agendas, including the international framework for action to be adopted at the World Education Forum, 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea.

The Conference, held over three days, was divided into two key segments. The first segment involved Regional Dialogue on EFA and Beyond (6–7 August 2014). During this segment, participants reviewed EFA progress and discussed issues, challenges and priorities for education post-2015. Their discussions and deliberations fed into the Asia-Pacific Statement on Education Beyond 2015 (the Bangkok Statement)[1] adopted on 8 August 2014. The second segment involved the Ministerial Forum on Education Beyond 2015. Here, education ministers engaged in roundtable discussions for the presentation and adoption of the Asia-Pacific Statement on Education Beyond 2015.

The process to determine the post-2015 education goals, targets and strategies will culminate in the World Education Forum 2015, in Incheon, Republic of Korea. Following this, the post-2015 sustainable development goals will be adopted at the UN Summit to be held in New York in September 2015. This report is a summary of the discussions throughout the three days of APREC deliberations, deliberations which have determined the education development priorities and perspectives of Asia-Pacific countries in the lead up to 2015 and beyond.

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1 See Annex IA for the Bangkok Statement.

Chapter 2

Education for All in Asia and the Pacific:
What Have We Achieved?

2.1 EFA Achievements and Challenges in the Region

It was in Jomtien, Thailand that delegates from 155 countries and representatives from some 150 governmental and non-governmental organizations gathered in 1990 to agree on the Education for All movement. To truly achieve Education for All, it was clear by 2000 that additional commitments were necessary, leading 164 governments to meet again in Dakar, Senegal, and pledge to achieve six specific Education for All (EFA)[2] goals (see table below) by 2015. Since then, six key goals have guided global education development. But as we approach 2015, what has been achieved? What gaps and challenges remain? And what lessons should inform the future education development agenda beyond 2015? The Conference began with a reflection on EFA successes and challenges across the Asia-Pacific region by both assessing the findings of the recent national EFA 2015 reviews and the draft regional EFA synthesis report.[3]

The Six Education for All (EFA) Goals

Goal 1	Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
Goal 2	Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
Goal 3	Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
Goal 4	Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
Goal 5	Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to, and achievement in, basic education of good quality.
Goal 6	Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

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2 More information about the EFA Movement can be accessed at:
   http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/
3 The EFA Synthesis Report (Draft) can be accessed at: http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/epr/APREC/16_Asia_Pacific_EFA_Synthesis_Report.pdf

Countries acknowledged that remarkable success has been made towards the EFA goals, especially EFA Goal 2 on universal primary education, and EFA Goal 5 on gender equality. Enrolment rates in primary education have increased over time with marked improvements in access to education. Likewise, gender parity gaps have been reduced in many countries, with many having reached parity. Meanwhile, significant challenges remain in EFA Goals 3, 4 and 6 on skills development, literacy and quality education, respectively. Progress towards the EFA Goal 1 on early childhood care and education has been mixed.

In recognizing that the EFA agenda remains a 'work-in-progress', and that countries should accelerate their efforts to achieve the six EFA goals, the future of education in the Asia-Pacific region will also integrate innovative strategies and practices, such as the use of ICTs in education, education for sustainable development, and global citizenship education. These strategies may become increasingly important when addressing the emerging developments and challenges across the region.

The objectives of the first APREC session[4] involved a review of subregional achievements and lessons learned in EFA, and the identification of remaining gaps, issues and priority areas for education development in countries of the various subregions. Participants were divided into four subregional groups: Central and East Asia; Southeast Asia; South and West Asia; and the Pacific. This chapter provides a summary of the regional and subregional achievements, remaining issues and challenges, lessons learned in EFA, and regional recommendations for education in the post-2015 development agenda.

The Asia-Pacific region as a whole has made significant progress across the six EFA goals, with progress most pronounced against EFA Goals 2 and 5. There has been much success in expanding access to and increasing participation in pre-primary and primary education. Overall, more children are transitioning to lower secondary education. Gender parity in terms of primary enrolment has been achieved in most countries and subregions, although patterns vary within and between countries. Underpinning this progress has been a strong political commitment to EFA. In many instances, national legislation and strategies have been developed throughout the region to specifically address EFA challenges.

However, a number of issues and gaps in EFA persist, ranging from governance to the quality of education. In relation to the EFA Goals, countries continue to struggle with EFA Goals 3, 4 and 6 on skills development, literacy and quality education respectively. While a number of countries, including India, Mongolia, the Philippines, Samoa and Viet Nam, have developed and strengthened their national ECCE policies and have improved child survival and nutrition, progress towards EFA Goal 1 on the provision of early childhood care and education continues to lag in many countries.

In the Asia-Pacific region, significant challenges remain relating to EFA Goal 6, improving the quality of education. Some countries also face continued difficulty in achieving EFA Goal 1, and many countries voiced their concerns regarding EFA Goal 4. Indeed, literacy levels among adults are persistently low in some countries, and only limited provision of skills development programmes for youth and adults. Such is the case in South and West Asia where the majority of the world's adults without literacy live. The availability and accessibility of appropriate life skills programmes that impart livelihood skills and transversal skills are also limited and need to be expanded.

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4 For a summary of the APREC session proceedings, please see Annex II: Conference Structure.

Throughout all subregional groups, poor educational governance was acknowledged as a complex challenge that governments continue to grapple with. The weak management of resources and the discontinuous nature of coordination between and within government bodies, development organizations and other key stakeholders in education continue to hinder progress towards EFA. Although much effort has been made to improve coordination and to strengthen partnerships, there is a general tendency to work in silos within governments. Enhanced coordination is required both vertically and horizontally for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness. Enhanced motivation and accountability are also required so that all duty bearers, including administrators and teachers, provide optimal learning environments.

Participants acknowledged that major data gaps continue to paint an incomplete picture of the education landscape in many countries. The lack of indicators to measure and monitor such things as transversal skills development, school bullying and school satisfaction makes it difficult to help inform the development and implementation of appropriate and targeted policies and interventions to improve school environments.

In addition, learning environments in many countries are not safe, child-friendly, inclusive and/or gender-sensitive, which presents a significant hurdle for many, especially girls, those from ethnic and linguistic minorities and those with disabilities. The provision of education to migrants and ethnic minority groups, including multilingual education, and the integration of migrant children and learners from ethnic minority groups have yet to be addressed. These issues were especially highlighted in the Southeast Asia and Central and East Asia group discussions.

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region struggle to provide ECCE and basic education for children with disabilities. It is estimated that a third of out-of-school children are children with disabilities. Many are also girls. There is a need to make all education systems inclusive, and ensure adequate provision for the specific needs of children with disabilities. Governments need to identify effective interventions and strategies to provide equal opportunities for education for all and ensure the safety, security and meaningful inclusion of all students.

Despite the region's success in expanding access to education and increasing enrolment rates, participants agreed that a host of internal efficiency issues, including late entry, low retention, high repetition, drop-out, absenteeism, and low transition rates, continue to undermine education systems. In some countries, girls underperform in school, repeat grades, and are less likely to transition to the next level of education. Some eventually leave the system. Conversely, in countries such as the Philippines and Malaysia, boys are underperforming, repeating grades and have a higher tendency of dropping out. In both cases, poverty plays a big part in determining the time span of a student's formal education. Participants also raised concern regarding the low participation of women across numerous sectors, most notably in political and social sectors. In the Asia-Pacific region, one's gender and socio-economic status have undeniable implications on future employment prospects and professional development.

The poor quality of education continues to undermine education systems in the Asia-Pacific region and deny children and young people better opportunities. The shortage of teachers at all levels of education in some countries, especially in remote and hard-to-reach areas, continues to hamper access to quality education. Attracting and retaining individuals in the teaching profession is a challenge because salaries are low and incentives are lacking. In many countries of the region, the teaching profession is not as attractive as other professions.

As governments struggle to secure, develop, and maintain good quality teachers, discussions pointed to the need for more effective teacher training and teacher certification programmes for all levels of education to improve and upgrade teacher skills. Issues of unqualified contract teachers and the limited availability of teachers spread across smaller schools were emphasized by the Southeast Asia and South and West Asia groups. While the pupil-to-teacher ratio may be low in these schools, the lack of qualified teachers is a major problem. The issue of teacher absenteeism was also noted. Other common challenges concerning the quality of education are poor learning outcomes and achievements, the need to improve school assessment methods, and the need to standardize ECCE.

2.2 EFA Achievements and Challenges by Subregion[5]

a. Central and East Asia

The Central and East Asia group agreed that most of the EFA goals have been achieved in their respective subregions because of strong political commitment and consistent policies. Both subregions, however, are not without challenges. For Central Asia, more attention should be given to ECCE, and similarly for East Asia, countries including Mongolia need to improve ECCE for children with disabilities.

All countries in the Central and East Asia group agreed that the quality of education can be improved, especially with the influx of migrants and minority groups. For example, in the Republic of Korea, the Government has a specific policy to support the education of migrants. The development of non-cognitive, transversal skills is an area that has received attention from the Governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea. In connection to this, the Government of Japan is finding ways to improve school assessment methods. In general, participants of this group agreed that the lack of indicators to measure skills continues to hold back their efforts to improve the quality of education.

ICTs in education are being used by the Republic of Korea to reach the unreached. Country participants acknowledged that ICTs should be better integrated into teacher education. Participants agreed that ICTs in education have great potential, and also that new indicators must be developed to measure the quality of education. For the post-2015 agenda, group members recommended the use of ICTs as an important strategy to improve the quality of education. Moreover, it was agreed that education should continue to focus on issues of inclusion, that indicators to assess the acquisition of skills should be developed, investment in teachers should increase, and the emerging issues of climate change and migration should be addressed through the integration of climate change and multicultural education into school curricula and teacher training. It was also noted that learning opportunities should be guaranteed for migrant children. Above all, for any success to take place, political commitment and the consistency of policies remain vital.

b. Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, achievements have been significant, particularly in improving access to ECCE and primary education. Enrolment rates in ECCE and the number of entrants to Grade 1 with pre-primary experience have increased across Southeast Asia. The increased recognition of the importance of ECCE has led to the expansion of ECCE services and facilities in countries such as Lao PDR, Malaysia, and the

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5 The EFA Synthesis Report (Draft), used as stimulus to this discussion, can be accessed at: http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/epr/APREC/16_Asia_ Pacific_EFA_Synthesis_Report.pdf

Philippines. Most countries in Southeast Asia have achieved gender parity at the primary education level. In support of the EFA goals, a range of legislative measures have been taken by all countries in Southeast Asia. Some examples include Myanmar's enactment of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Bill in February 2014, a law concerned with the systematic provision of ECCE services for children aged 0–8 years old; Thailand's Education Act of 1999 which stipulates that the state is to provide twelve years of education at no cost from fiscal year 2003 onwards; and Malaysia's Illiteracy Eradicating Policy (1961), National Policy for Women (2009), and Persons with Disabilities Act (2008) which are some of the major policies and acts applicable to the provision of literacy training and basic and continuing education for all adults.

Despite notable progress and achievements over the past decade, the participants of this group agreed that the subregion continues to face a number of challenges across the goals. Equity is a major issue as marginalized groups are continuously overlooked. Disparities continue to persist at all levels of education, due in part to poverty, discrimination, and socio-economic factors that continue to compromise the right to education. The low levels of literacy among youth and adults remain a major concern in the subregion. Likewise, gender remains an important issue. Despite having reached gender parity at the primary level, boys are underperforming in primary education in a number of countries, as is the case in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. When discussing the quality of education, group members agreed that attracting, training and retaining good quality teachers have been challenging. At the same time, some countries that participate in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have been producing satisfactory results, with students achieving good learning outcomes. Similarly, as a developing country, Viet Nam's education system provides an example to learn from, given the major progress made in EFA in the country.

The group emphasized the importance of regional and subregional collaboration, which allows governments and partners to network and work together to respond to common issues and trends, such as student mobility. The importance of competency building through collaborative initiatives for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), such as that of Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam in technical and vocational education, was emphasized by participants. In terms of education and training in ASEAN countries, the integration of the English language as the official lingua franca of ASEAN has led to the creation of English language programmes in countries without a history of English language usage. Thailand for instance, launched the English Speaking Year Project, aiming to teach conversational skills to 14 million students.

Empowering boys was suggested as a way to address boys' underperformance in school and to prevent boys from dropping out. Promoting the value of education among parents was also suggested as a way to influence a child's learning experience and thus their learning achievements. The group also voiced policy concerns and suggested the further use of research and data collection in policy-making. In addressing disparities in access to education, multilingual education, where applicable, was recommended as a suitable means to reaching the hardest to reach and to improving the quality of education in a number of Southeast Asian countries.

c. South and West Asia

Participants of the South and West Asia group acknowledged that the progress of EFA in the region presents a mixed picture as several countries have performed poorly on many critical indicators despite increased access to and participation in education. This is particularly so at the pre-primary and primary levels. The region experienced the fastest decline in the number of out-of-school children, but

it continues to be home to 10 million out-of-school children of primary school age, and 25.7 million out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age. While parity has been achieved in a number of countries, the region is home to four countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal) with the highest gender disparity rates globally. The region also saw impressive progress in terms of increasing adult literacy rates. Still, of all the regions of the world, this region accounts for the largest share of adults without literacy. Furthermore, the population of adults without literacy has remained stable at over 400 million over the years. Even more worrying is the fact that children in this region are not learning enough in schools. One statistic suggests that one-third of children in South and West Asia do not have the minimum reading standards (GMR 2014). This is further confirmed by several national achievement tests and surveys.

Participants noted their governments' heightened commitment to promoting basic education, and shared important initiatives and successful experiences currently under implementation in the region. Countries such as India (through their Right to Education Act) and Pakistan have passed legislation and developed national strategies to ensure the rights of all to education. Nepal has launched a national campaign to promote literacy, while Bangladesh has been the champion in terms of promoting girls' education. Afghanistan is attempting to rebuild its education system after several years of conflict.

Participants identified several challenges facing the education sector in the region. First, it was noted that inadequate funding (some countries' spending is among the lowest in the world) combined with weak governance, poor transparency and ineffective accountability mechanisms contribute to marginalization, disparities and low quality education. This is further worsened by a shortage of qualified teachers and poor teacher preparation programmes. In this context, countries see teacher shortages and poor teacher management as their biggest challenges. The poor quality of teacher preparation also plays a big part. Many countries struggle to attract, train, certify, retain and reward good teachers at all levels for both formal and non-formal education.

Second, despite the rhetoric of completely free education, no one country has been able to provide free education, and this places financial burdens on poor families, leading to high drop-out rates. Third, socio-cultural factors, cultural traditions and gender role stereotypes contribute to gender-based inequalities in educational access, participation and learning achievement. This is further aggravated by increasing incidences of violence against girls and women in recent years.

The recommendations from the South and West Asia group were concerned with improving governance and accountability systems, strengthening partnerships between government and non-government organizations, and mobilizing additional funding for education from multiple sources. Participants stressed the need to ensure that legislation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are enforced. They also stressed the need to ensure transparency and accountability as important aspects of efficient and effective management systems. Governments should invest more in innovation and research, as well as education management information systems (EMIS). Public investment in education should be increased and enhanced with consideration of unit costs. In terms of partnerships, participants recommended the need for greater balance between governments and the private sector in providing education services. With regard to the quality of education, South and West Asian participants recommended that governments should craft supportive teacher policies, ensure professional development and credential systems for teachers, reform curricula and textbooks, and promote inclusive learning environments and enhanced teaching/learning tools. Finally, the participants agreed on the need for formulating inclusive and targeted education policies to combat marginalization, including gender inequality.

d. The Pacific

In the Pacific, achievements were made in a number of areas including access to pre-primary, primary and secondary education. Adult literacy rates improved in certain countries with the Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa and Tonga reaching over 95 per cent in 2012. The GPI in primary and lower secondary gross enrolment ratios (GERs) were close to parity, and some Pacific countries, including the Cook Islands and Kiribati, reported having more well trained teachers in primary education.

The Pacific countries continue to face challenges across each of the six EFA goals. In particular, the subregion struggles with providing access to ECCE and secondary education. Retention, starting late, repetition, drop-out and absenteeism continue to delay progress towards EFA in the Pacific countries. Some countries struggle to address disparities in and between islands where many children come from families with low income, are children with disabilities, and/or live in rural or outer islands. The quality of education remains a major concern, with students registering poor results in literacy and numeracy rates, and many teachers are not adequately trained. The Pacific countries also face issues of data management (availability and quality), and also struggle to strengthen coordination among stakeholders in ECCE, TVET and non-formal education.

Reflecting on past EFA experiences, the Pacific has learned that effective education legislation and policy is crucial to education development progress. However, passing legislation is not enough. Governments need to revisit and review education acts and subsector policies to ensure that they remain relevant and are properly enforced. School fees must be abolished and textbooks and transportation should be provided for free. School grants should also be provided where necessary. To improve the quality of education, governments should introduce minimum quality standards for education, improve curricula, provide in-service teacher training, and also develop standards for teachers and principals. The countries agreed that a sector wide approach (SWAp) to education policy design and implementation is necessary. Similarly, having a robust EMIS is important for policy planning and consultations with stakeholders. Moreover, from the available evidence, initiatives targeting ECCE, children in outer islands and remote/rural areas, and children with disabilities, should be developed and implemented.

The Pacific countries recommended that the post-2015 education agenda should focus on improving access to and retention at all levels of education. They also recommended the strengthening of TVET. Gender equality should be ensured at all levels, and enabling environments for learning, as well as the improvement of teacher quality through pre- and in-service training, should be strengthened. Participants also agreed that the agenda should consider the improvement of education services for children with disabilities. Increased and better-targeted education financing should remain on the education agenda along with capacity development of ministries of education vis-à-vis EMIS, data collection and monitoring. Finally, improving access to the use of ICTs in education for enhancing life skills was also recommended by the Pacific group.

2.3 Recommendations Based on EFA Reviews in Asia and the Pacific

The need for improved governance – The region agreed that more efforts should be invested in improving the overall governance of education. More specifically, participants recommended that governments should not only improve and ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency of education management systems, but that governments should also ensure the enforcement and implementation of legislation and M&E systems to address intra- and inter-country inequalities. A call for strengthened investment in research and innovation was also made.

Improved financial distributions to education – In the Asia-Pacific region, insufficient and inequitable financing to education is a major concern and a persistent barrier to providing and accessing good quality education. In this regard, the participants recommended that governments revise their financial distribution strategies and plans for more targeted spending on education, as well as diversify financing systems and seek alternative funding sources. Lastly, more investment in ECCE and post-primary education should also be made in the Asia-Pacific region.

Improved data collection and management – It was agreed by participants that EMIS and data collection processes need to be improved in the region. Simultaneously, the capacities of ministries of education must be further developed in this area.

Strengthened partnerships – For education post-2015, the region recommended the strengthening of partnerships between the government and the private sector in providing education services. Collaboration between teacher organizations and the greater involvement of teachers in decision-making processes were also recommended as areas that require further development.

Tackling remaining EFA challenges – Participants acknowledged that the region still faces challenges in the areas of access, participation and inclusion in education. To this end, they recommended that the post-2015 education agenda continue to improve access to and retention in education, all the while ensuring gender equality. Simultaneously, governments should focus targeted efforts on reaching marginalized and disadvantaged groups. The participants recognized the role and importance of languages and ICTs in education and that these two tools should be used to reach more learners. Parenting education for ECCE should be further developed. Non-formal education, TVET and flexible learning programmes should be improved, especially for youth. More attention and focus should be given to children with disabilities.

A strong focus on quality – Participants from the region agreed that the quality of education should be highlighted in the post-2015 education agenda. More specifically, participants recommended that governments invest more in the professional development of teachers by improving the quality of pre- and in-service training and establishing credential systems for teachers. Conducive learning environments and teaching/learning tools should be established and improved. In terms of curriculum reform, participants recommended that the topics of climate change and disaster risk reduction should be integrated. Finally, it was recommended that education post-2015 should aim to ensure that the education learners receive is relevant and that the skills they acquire are useful and valued in the labour market.

The Importance of addressing global challenges through Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development – Taking into consideration the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region and the challenges of a changing world, participants recommended that intercultural dialogues focusing on peace should be promoted in the post-2015 agenda. Global Citizenship Education is becoming more relevant and is an area governments should consider and promote. Encompassing all aspects of education, innovation is needed to respond to remaining challenges and to address emerging issues such as climate change and migration. Lastly, participants recommended that the alignment and cooperation between global partners and national governments be strengthened.

Chapter 3

Transforming Education in Asia and the Pacific:
Where Are We Heading?

While a focus on the EFA achievements and challenges across the region allowed for the above subregional perspectives and recommendations to emerge, so too did the discussion of education in core thematic areas. Through five key areas: 1) basic education; 2) skills and competencies; 3) global citizenship education and education for sustainable development; 4) teachers; and 5) governance and financing, participants shared regional perspectives on the proposed post-2015 education agenda drawing upon the Muscat Agreement, an agreement developed as a result of the recent Global Education for All Meeting in Muscat, Oman (12–4 May 2014), as well as the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG). Collectively, participants reflected on priority areas, indicators and benchmarks, as proposed by these pre-established provisional targets. Below is a summary of discussion findings in each of these five key areas.

3.1 Basic Education for All Children

Basic education – a fundamental human right enshrined in international treaties, national constitutions, legislation and policies – provides the necessary foundation of lifelong learning and human development. While countries differ in their definitions of basic education, it is increasingly agreed that five or six years of primary education simply cannot provide the knowledge, skills and competencies to ensure a prosperous and fulfilling life in the 21st Century. In fact, many countries of the Asia-Pacific region have already extended their basic education to include Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), as well as lower-secondary education. Both the Muscat Agreement, which has defined an overarching goal and global targets for education, and the Proposal of OWG have also emphasized the need for a basic education agenda with expanded scope and duration as part of the 2015 development agenda.

However, in building this new development agenda, what should we expect of basic education in the 21st Century? For how many years should it stretch, for what age group should it cater, and for what ultimate purpose should it serve? These pertinent questions, among others, shaped the discussion during the thematic session on basic education for all children. The session was divided into two parts: Part A focused on regional perspectives around the ECCE and basic education targets identified by the Muscat Agreement, while Part B focused on the identification and assessment of relevant indicators to strengthen basic education for all children. This chapter provides a summary of both Part A and B discussions through 1) regional perspectives on ECCE and basic education, and 2) strategies and priorities for strengthening basic education across the region.

3.1.1 Regional Perspectives on ECCE and Basic Education

There are, across the Asia-Pacific region, an undeniable host of shared regional challenges befalling ECCE and basic education. We must, for example, look to address the quality of learning, we must improve the quality of non-formal education (NFE) programmes and we must enhance the equitable and smooth participation of all children in basic education. It is also clear that much needs to be done to address issues of exclusion and gender inequalities, that improving the supply of qualified teachers is necessary and that strengthening government commitment is required. During this session, participants reflected on these challenges. More specifically, the conversation centred around the importance of improving access to quality ECCE and basic education, on improving learning outcomes, and on improving data and information management.

Improving Access to ECCE and Basic Education

The free provision of pre-primary education, but on whose shoulders do we stand?

Participants agreed, generally, to the free provision of pre-primary education. There were questions, however, regarding the compulsory nature of pre-primary education. We need change, we need greater access for all, but upon whose shoulders do we place the burden of responsibility? It was felt ultimately that primary responsibility for ensuring access to quality ECCE should fall upon the State. This focus on access should be equity-based, that is, it should address the multivariate barriers and bottlenecks inhibiting greater access, such as poverty, location, language and disability. To this end, participants underscored a rights-based approach to ECCE, proposing universal access as a target rather than 'X per cent of girls and boys' as expressed in the Muscat Agreement.

Access to ECCE for all, but what, in fact, is meant by 'access'?

Given that improving access is indeed an important focus of any proposed ECCE development goal, the term 'access' must be clearly defined. As one participant questioned, 'What is it, in fact that we are guaranteeing access to?' This raised an important issue, given the contextual and definitional differences surrounding ECCE services across the region. Some argued that given the international definition of early childhood from birth to 8 years of age, ECCE services should encompass the full continuum from birth (or pre-natal) through to early primary grades and include support to parents and families. 'Learning Begins at Birth' as was famously stated in the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All. In this context, the sorts of services available inform the level of access to ECCE across the region.

The inevitable expansion of basic education

In addition to strengthening access to quality ECCE services, the issue of expanding basic education to include lower secondary was also discussed. In reference to the number of years of compulsory education, there was a debate – though not conclusive – over whether this should refer to a number of years or the child's chronological age. The need to consider national legislation for the minimum age for employment and its harmonization with ages for compulsory schooling also was discussed. In many countries, children do not have access to education because they may enter work, often between the ages of 14–16.

In some countries, basic education includes adult education and/or adult literacy. While definitional differences across countries exist, and while no clear consensus on the age range and duration of basic education was reached, the move to expand the scope and duration of basic education as proposed by both the Muscat Agreement and the Proposal of OWG was supported by participants. It was also suggested that targets take into account 'second chance' education, given the significant number of out-of-school children in the Asia-Pacific region and the needs of such children to be addressed through alternative, quality learning systems offering flexible pathways.

Improving ECCE and Basic Education Learning Outcomes[6]

Determining 'School Readiness'

Thanks to enhanced research evidence, particularly in the field of neuroscience, it is widely agreed that early interventions shape the formation of brain cells and, in turn, how children grow and develop. Participants agreed that improving access to pre-primary education alone would not be sufficient to ensure holistic child development, particularly in just one year as proposed in the Muscat Agreement. It was also felt that measuring 'school readiness' could be determined by assessing both a) the child's readiness, and b) the school's readiness to receive children.

Some argued that, with regard to assessing a child's readiness, focusing on ECCE system performance might be preferable to performing individual child assessments. It may also be important to allow for community-based measures of 'school readiness', particularly given the varying pace at which children develop. At the same time, participants agreed that 'school readiness', as referred to in Muscat Agreement Target 1, should not be narrowly measured by cognitive or academic skills only; it must, as they acknowledged, reflect physical, socio-emotional and linguistic competencies across varying cultural contexts. With regard to the school's readiness, participants stressed that schools must also be inclusive, well-resourced, well-managed and must maintain a sufficient number of qualified teachers to support the transition from ECCE to primary education.

What should the outcome of quality basic education be?

On the one hand, there is undeniable difficulty in pre-determining the skills needed by 2030, the deadline for the Muscat Agreement. On the other hand, it is well-recognized that education must go further than providing the basic foundational skills; learners must be equipped with the requisite skills for the world beyond school and must be capable of adapting to a rapidly changing world. So, what competencies should all learners walk away with as a result of basic education? It was argued by some that acceptable learning outcomes should be agreed at the national level rather than dictated by international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS. This argument stemmed in part from the negative impacts associated with international assessments in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region, assessments which may overlook the significance of incorporating 'transversal skills'[7] into the curriculum.

6 Some reflection on learning outcomes is also captured in Part I: Skills and Competencies under Foundational Skills. The discussion in this session does not, however, contradict any of the findings of that session. Rather, these sections appear to complement each other.

7 Transversal skills are discussed in Chapter 2.2: Skills and Competencies.

Data Gaps Inhibiting Basic Education Development

A major issue that continues to plague education development gains across the region is that of significant education data gaps, and often, the lack of accurate data on out-of-school children and marginalized groups. Where are these gaps and how do they inhibit basic education development? Participants reflected on some examples:

- Data on NFE sector are often not sufficiently captured in education management information systems (EMIS).

- ECCE is also usually not part of EMIS as it is often not part of the education sector.

- In many cases, both the privatization and decentralization of education systems have led to the loss of key data or to data fragmentation.

- At both the international and national levels, captured data do not always support country level improvement of national education systems. Where data are available at international levels for international comparison, one participant questioned, 'How can the data be made sufficiently relevant to the local context?'

- At the national level, data captured are not always sufficient, do not always paint an accurate picture, and thus, do not always support effective improvement of national education systems. This is particularly true where EMIS does not sufficiently capture data on children out of formal schooling and where EMIS is not complemented by household survey data. As one participant reflected, even where enrolment data and literacy data are available, they do not always capture the reasons why students have been pushed out of education systems, their source of vulnerability or disadvantage; averages too do not always present a true picture of individual circumstances. Yet, understanding these reasons is essential to addressing the issue of out-of-school populations.

3.1.2 Strategies and Priorities for Basic Education

While some areas, such as the agreed age and duration of basic education, are difficult to reconcile across the region, broad consensus does exist regarding key strategies and priorities for basic education leading up to 2030. We can, for example, agree on the great value of free and compulsory education for all children by 2030, on improving a child's readiness for learning and schooling and on reforming secondary education across the region. In Asia and the Pacific, we can also agree on the great value of creating requisite conditions for quality education and effective learning, on improving teacher quality and education system efficiency, on addressing marginalization and on promoting inclusion. We can agree unequivocally on the need to eliminate gender disparities in education, on the need for strengthened NFE systems and on the need to develop an aggressive plan to finish the unfinished EFA agenda. As one participant remarked, we should be careful to focus not on 'beyond EFA,' but instead on 'EFA *and* beyond'. Participants also brought forward new ideas, ideas that have been given less emphasis thus far, but that nonetheless must be acknowledged and integrated into our strategizing on basic education post-2015.

An integrated approach to ECCE – With regard to the proposed Muscat Agreement targets, some participants flagged the stand-alone nature of the ECCE target, noting that success in achieving Target 1 on ECCE will depend on the careful recognition and integration of ECCE across other targets, including for example, targets on teaching and finance, as well as other OWG goals, such as health, food security and infrastructure.

The need for ECCE regulation and legal frameworks – Participants felt that the increasing privatization of ECCE services occurring in the region necessitates the greater regulation of ECCE across the board. At the same time, caution must be paid to the downward extension of ECCE into the education system so that increased regulation does not promote inappropriate pedagogical practice or inhibit system flexibility and, in turn, the accessibility of ECCE services. In addition, enabling legal frameworks at the national level was recognized as necessary to ensure basic education for all children.

Improved education data collection and use – Participants recognized the great need for improved data collection and use at all levels of basic education (from birth until the final year of basic education). It was proposed that in addition to regular household surveys and administrative data collection, regular surveys and analysis on the impacts of learning environments (including culture, family and community factors) may help shed light on the often hidden issues underlying high drop-out rates.

Enhanced data collection on private schools – Participants also recognized the need for enhanced data collection on private schools, especially in decentralized systems, to help paint a more accurate picture of the state of education. In other words, it was felt that governments must effectively regulate and monitor the private provision of education so as to ensure that parents are receiving value for money and that divisions between public and private education are not generating significant educational divides. Some suggested a need for more innovative indicators to assess efficiency of government input into education systems, to assess attitudes of parents, students and the community to education, and to better assess the multivariate ways in which learning takes place. Realtime monitoring of teacher absenteeism was proposed as one example, given that in some countries the incidence of teacher absenteeism is very high.

Strengthened capacity development in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) – Participants recognized the need to strengthen the capacities of governments in M&E to improve the collection of education data and to ensure that data are used effectively to inform policies and strategies.

The need for strong government commitment – Ultimately, however, participants agreed that developing 'revolutionary' indicators and improved data collection methods would not be enough; it was felt that strong government commitment and leadership to establish enabling mechanisms must be seen as crucial to achieving basic education for all in the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, throughout discussions, participants commonly pointed to the important role of the State in removing social and economic barriers and ensuring that duty bearers are held accountable and that children are able to claim their right to education. Harmonizing the minimum working age with the number of years of compulsory education was proposed to help prevent child labour and enhance one's choices beyond schooling. To this end, it was proposed that global targets make explicit mention of necessary national strategies, plans and resource provisions.

3.2 Skills and Competencies

The purpose of any education system should be to equip learners with the ability to live a fulfilling and meaningful life. To this end, education must serve to nurture the development of the skills and competencies needed for the world beyond school. In today's world, these skills[8] have arguably

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8 The terms skills and competencies, which may differ in scope and focus, are often used interchangeably throughout this chapter.

expanded and attempts to define the requisite skills and competencies have led to the identification of three key categories of learning outcomes: competencies for knowing (foundation skills), competencies for doing (specialized skills), and competencies for being and living together (transversal skills).[9]

In Asia and the Pacific, how well do we measure up in these three key categories? Of 650 million primary-aged students worldwide, 38 per cent are not developing basic foundation skills; a stark statistic presented at the outset of this thematic session. In this region, low levels of adult literacy, especially among marginalized groups and women, further complicate the situation. Additionally, specialized skills needs will continue to change rapidly in an increasingly globalized, regionalized and interconnected society, making it difficult for education systems to keep pace and ensure that youth, as well as adults, are adequately equipped with the skills and competencies needed for the world beyond formal schooling. While the need for transversal skills is well-recognized, understanding, defining and measuring these skills remain a persistent challenge.

The scope of this thematic session, which focused on foundation, specialized and transversal skills, was particularly broad; a reflection perhaps of the increasingly scrupulous focus now placed on the strengthening of learning outcomes at all levels. This session was divided into two parts: Part A focused on regional trends, issues and challenges in regard to the acquisition of skills and competencies, while Part B focused on the policy implications and strategies to achieve the desired skills and competencies, both within and outside formal schooling. This chapter provides a summary of both Part A and B discussions through 1) regional perspectives on foundation skills, specialized skills and transversal skills, and 2) key strategies and priorities for improving skills and competencies across the region.

3.2.1 Regional Perspectives on Skills and Competencies

The value and necessity of foundation skills[10]

Across the Asia-Pacific region, the attainment of basic competencies in literacy and numeracy, particularly in the developing countries of the region, remains a concern. Through presentations and discussion, participants recognized the enormous disparities both within and between countries with regard to basic foundation skills. Indeed, by measure of international assessments, such as TIMSS and PISA, the region is home to some of the highest performing education systems as well as some of the lowest. It is also home to the majority of the world's population without literacy. Literacy issues are particularly serious for marginalized groups, especially among women and girls. To this end, it was argued that there is a need to better understand the learning needs of marginalized groups and develop innovative approaches to ensure these marginalized groups are also developing basic foundation skills, including via contextualized teaching materials.

The ever-changing nature of specialized skills

While each subregion may be different, it was agreed that overall there have been major economic changes across the region,[11] leading on the one hand, to enhanced growth and competition, and on

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9   These categories have been informed by the concept of the 'four pillars of learning', as first identified in the landmark report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, as well as the 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report on youth and skills.

10 The issue of foundation skills acquisition is also described in Section 3.1: Basic Education for All Children.

11 Some of these changes include the extended integration of the product market and the labour market, including via the emergence of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2015. There has also been a marked transition towards more knowledge intensive industries as a result of the growing knowledge-based economy, and in the process, intensified competition in technologically advanced sectors.

the other hand, to increased income inequality and continued poverty. At the same time, these changes place ever-shifting demands on specialized skills needs in Asia and the Pacific. Because of these shifting demands, participants felt that when discussing the relevance of competencies that might be needed for the future, a particular focus on adaptability and flexibility is important. In this sense, 'learning to learn' was considered to be an important purpose of any education system and one that must be incorporated into specialized skills training, in sync with labour market demands. Participants also acknowledged that together with foundation skills, specialized skills were just as critical as transversal skills, and that the growing focus on strengthening transversal skills should not overshadow focus on improving specialized competencies through technical skills training.

Transversal skills are in high demand, yet is there agreement around its meaning?

It was acknowledged, both through presentations and discussions, that while some studies have looked to identify and define transversal skills, these skills, arguably, have not been clearly identified or defined in the Asia-Pacific region, at least not under the banner of 'transversal skills'. How do we know, for example, that prescribed transversal skills are the same for all people, across all countries? Is it possible to identify transversal skills that are specific to the Asia-Pacific region? To this end, 'Integrating Transversal Competencies in Education Policy and Practice,' a study coordinated by UNESCO Bangkok,[12] identified five skills areas considered to be increasingly important in the future: 1) critical and innovative thinking; 2) interpersonal; 3) intrapersonal; 4) global citizenship and media; and 5) information literacy. Simultaneously, it was acknowledged that the further strengthening of a shared understanding of transversal skills across countries was important.[13] *The ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook*, which was developed previously to help build a common ASEAN identity, was recognized as another useful reference. With regard to both curriculum and pedagogy, it was suggested that the focus of learning should be joyful and that this joyful process of learning could help foster transversal competencies.

3.2.2 Key Strategies and Priorities for Skills and Competencies

Based on discussion in these three key skills domains, namely, foundation, specialized and transversal, participants identified a number of key strategies and priorities for strengthening the development of skills and competencies in all three key areas across the region:

Foundation skills for all should include all – It was recognized and accepted by participants that all children, youth and adults should obtain foundation skills. To this end, it was argued that the proposed targets should aim to ensure that all adults achieve functional literacy skills, rather than a specific percentage as proposed by the Muscat Agreement, in order to drastically increase literacy rates in the region. In addition, the full cost of addressing literacy needs should be carefully assessed at the national level, and concrete plans of action to help reach marginalized populations established.

Distinguishing skills types should not imply the separation of skills development – Given the multivariate skills required by all in the 21st Century – foundation, specialized and transversal – there must be an integrated approach to skills development. To achieve this, curriculum review may be

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12 The outcome of the research initiated and coordinated by UNESCO Bangkok can be accessed at: http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/epr/ERI-Net_Seminar/2013/Transversal_16_Oct.pdf

13 This call for a common understanding of 'transversal skills' echoes the sentiments expressed during the parallel discussion on global citizenship education (GCED), two arguably related terms. Participants of this session argued that GCED, which is reflected in the proposed education targets post-2015, must be carefully defined if countries are to implement effective strategies.

necessary to ensure that educational curricula are competency-based, relevant to learners' future productive life and appropriately tailored to the local context. In addition, it was suggested that setting concrete benchmarks related to specific skills for different age groups or levels might be appropriate.

Differentiated pedagogical approaches: A must for skills development – To improve skills development, a more learner-centred teaching approach, especially differentiated pedagogical approaches to meet learners' different needs and to unpack learners' potential, is necessary. This was explicitly stressed in the context of marginalized populations.

Greater focus on competency-based assessment – It was recognized that there is no simple measure for assessing competencies acquired, especially across areas related to creativity, critical thinking and entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, it was argued that a much stronger focus on competency-based assessment is needed, and that to achieve this focus, sustained political commitment, continuous professional support for teachers and stronger capacity development are required.

The need for context specific indicators – With regard to all skills and competencies, it was felt that common targets and indicators were necessary, but that some context specific definitions and additional indicators will be needed across countries and subregions, especially for specialized and transversal skills. This was based on the experiences associated with EFA Goal 3, which, because of inadequate definition, has been particularly difficult to assess and achieve. At the same time, regional platforms, such as ASEAN, can be utilized for building common vision, planning and implementation with shared understanding of skills and competencies across the region. In this context, it was also stressed that indicators should reflect learning across the range of formal, non-formal and informal learning settings.

Establishing different pathways to learning – Education reforms must help ensure that alternative pathways to learning are both well-established and help provide relevant learning programmes to cater to diverse needs. These pathways must also encourage continuous learning from the lifelong learning perspective. Flexible teaching strategies for marginalized groups was also raised, as well as the importance of ensuring sufficient teacher training in using ICTs to facilitate active and deeper learning.

3.3 Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development

Nurturing global citizenship contributes to ensuring peace, and peace is indispensable to sustainable development. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – two interrelated and complementary concepts – reflect a paradigm shift in our thinking around the fundamental purpose of education. Globalization brings an ever-increasing degree of interdependence, and in this process, a number of distinct challenges and opportunities. An individual born today is part not only of a local community within a definite national boundary, but of a community more global than ever, and as such, will need the requisite skills, competencies, values and attitudes to respond to the shared challenges and opportunities that our interdependence inevitably presents. To this end, ESD and GCED allow every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable and peaceful future. They also require participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable

development and world peace. GCED and ESD consequently promote competencies such as critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way.[14]

Through GCED and ESD, education is called upon to play an increasingly fundamental role in providing these necessary skills. This is reflected in the post-2015 education and development agenda proposed in the Muscat Agreement and the OMG proposal, both of which draw specific attention to the important value of GCED and ESD in achieving broader development outcomes. Participants of this session focused their discussion around three key areas: basic approaches and understandings of GCED, current policy trends underlying GCED and the measurability of GCED and ESD including through national, subnational and international assessments. The following presents a summary of key ideas in understandings of GCED, policy trends and key strategies and priorities for GCED and ESD in the region.

3.3.1 Understandings of Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development

The mutually reinforcing nature of GCED and ESD – It is clear that the biggest challenges we face today can no longer be solved by national efforts alone. Indeed, climate change and natural disasters, nuclear security, tensions across and within countries, financial crises and many other challenges require a global response. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are closely related in their recognition for global action to meet our shared global challenges and the important role of education in fostering universally shared values. GCED and ESD have commonalities, both supporting such innovative ideas as transformative pedagogy, transversal dimensions of learning, focus on educational content and education's contribution to the well-being of all people and to global sustainability.

GCED and ESD are also connected to other concepts such as Peace Education, Human Rights Education, Learning to Live Together and others, all of which work towards ensuring that education promotes peace and sustainability. Ensuring that learning is relevant to the world beyond school and that learners are equipped with the appropriate cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural skills is an increasing priority in the development of national curricula. While GCED and ESD have many commonalities and are mutually reinforcing, they also have their specificities, making them distinctive from each other.

Global Citizenship Education originates from a long tradition of work in the areas of Peace Education, Human Rights Education, Education for a Culture of Peace, and intercultural education, and is notably recognized as a key dimension for dealing with both the opportunities and challenges of globalization. Building on this experience, GCED is currently understood as education that aims to equip learners of all ages with those values, knowledge and skills that are based on, and instill respect for, human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be responsible global citizens. GCED gives learners the competencies and opportunities to realize their rights and obligations to promote a better world and future for all.[15]

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14 Drawing on UNESCO's leadership, the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) has been successful in raising awareness regarding ESD. It has mobilized stakeholders across the world, created a platform for international collaboration influenced policies, contributed to the coordination of stakeholders at the national level, and generated large amounts of concrete good practice projects in all areas of education and learning (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/resources/esd-good-practices/). The Global Action Programme on ESD, a follow-up of UNDESD, was endorsed at the UNESCO General Conference in 2013. In the UNESCO World Conference on ESD, which was held in Japan in November 2014, the implementation of the UNDESD was reviewed and further promotion of ESD was discussed (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/).

15 Global Citizenship Education – Preparing Learners for the Challenges of the XXI Century; http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002277/227729E.pdf

Education for Sustainable Development has been part of the effort to achieve sustainable development since 1992, when Chapter 36 of Agenda 21, the outcome document of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), identified education, training and public awareness as key to achieving sustainable development. ESD is also part of the implementation of the three Rio Conventions (on climate, biodiversity, and desertification) and various other global sustainable development frameworks. ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. While there are agreed understandings of these notions, participants acknowledged that the reframing of GCED, and other similar concepts, according to local contexts to ensure their relevance, does not favour a single definition for GCED and ESD across all societies.

In Nauru, for example, the difficulty of integrating refugees and asylum seekers into the education system was raised as an important issue and one to which GCED might bring both relevant and necessary solutions. However, there was a call from some to design a practical approach so that GCED could effectively respond to this challenge. To this, and to other calls for stronger operational guidance on GCED, it was argued that what matters most is a clear understanding of the purpose of education itself and a shared vision and strategy at the global level. Such a perspective, it was felt, could help strengthen GCED and ESD, and help promote universally shared values in understanding multiple identities, as well as relevant socio-emotional skills, and can also promote a greater capacity to work towards the collective good.

In the absence of a universal definition of GCED or ESD, which is neither feasible nor desirable owing to the fact that these concepts are differently conceived and implemented in various contexts, UNESCO identified a list of four overarching priorities for measurement (see table below). This is an heuristic, yet consolidated, list developed following an extensive consultation process with experts from across the world.[16] The four priority areas cover three domains of learning – cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural. It is important to note that these conceptual priorities can be used, in different combinations, by countries to reflect their specific contexts and needs in terms of GCED. Furthermore, the goals and objectives of GCED can be determined by individual countries on the basis of these conceptual priorities, which are, importantly, applicable to both GCED and ESD.

GCED/ESD Competencies and priorities for measurement	
Cognitive	1. Learners have acquired knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global issues and the interconnectedness/inter- dependency of countries and different populations.
Socio-Emotional	2. Learners have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, with a sense of shared values and responsibilities and rights
	3. Learners show empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.
Behavioural	4. Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

16 This process included the following key landmark events and publications.

The 1st UNESCO Technical Consultation on Global Citizenship Education (Seoul, September 2013) which resulted in the outcome document titled *Global Citizenship Education: An Emerging Perspective*.

The 1st UNESCO Global Forum on Global Citizenship Education (Bangkok, December 2013), resulting in a list of key GCED and ESD priorities.

The 1st UNESCO publication titled *Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century*.

The UNESCO Experts Advisory Group (EAG) and the Measurement Ad-Hoc Team (MAT) meetings (Paris, June 2014), resulting in the formulation of the four overall priorities for measurement, presented in the table above.

These four priorities were shared with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of the EFA Steering Committee, which is responsible for recommending indicators for the post-2015 education goals and targets.

3.3.2 Current Policy Trends

Country presentations from Singapore, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea provided useful examples to understand, at a more practical level, how the concept of GCED/ESD has been incorporated into education systems of the region. The presentations revealed several important messages:

- Many countries of the region have reflected GCED/ESD related concepts as part of their education laws, acts and policies. It appears that in many cases, these concepts have been strengthened in recent years, especially through the review of national curricula. This was reflected in the findings of UNESCO Bangkok's Learning to Live Together Report, as well as the case studies on Singapore, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea as part of this session.

- In Singapore, for instance, the 2015 curriculum will largely focus on skills related to GCED/ESD, a reflection not just of educational reform, but also of a national recognition for the need for GCED. As was noted during this presentation, 'GCED is not part of the curriculum alone; it is part of national policy.'

- In the Republic of Korea, the 2009 curriculum has placed important emphasis on GCED/ESD related concepts, and this continues to be extended through new initiatives, such as the co-curricular Creative Experiential Learning initiative and the piloted 'free semester' policy. At the same time, however, some challenges remain in ensuring that the pressures of examinations do not override the important benefits of GCED and related initiatives.

- The Philippines has also placed emphasis on GCED/ESD related concepts across the curriculum through various subjects, and has incorporated the Delors concept of the Four Pillars of Learning, including 'learning to live together,' as an important philosophical basis to forming national and global identities among students.

3.3.3 Key Strategies and Priorities for GCED and ESD

A growing emphasis on the need to measure GCED and ESD related learning outcomes – Much is being done at both the national and international levels to help measure GCED and ESD. While countries are still using traditional forms of assessment, it is also clear, as reflected in the Learning to Live Together report and other research, that there has been a shift in countries of the region towards assessing socio-emotional intelligence. This is also reflected at the international level through existing assessments, such as the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which will, in 2018, include aspects on Global Competence. This calls for an agreement on key skills and competencies relating to GCED/ESD so that global tools for measuring GCED/ESD can be better aligned with the above priorities. Tension also exists between the need for uniformity for enhanced global tracking and the need for sensitivity to the local context. To this end, what should be measured needs to be determined, along with the degree of student engagement. This is certainly not easy given the diverse range of skills and competencies associated with GCED/ESD at different ages. Despite the complexities entailed, measuring GCED and ESD learning outcomes is feasible.

Measuring the benefits of GCED-ESD competencies – It was recognized that in order to promote GCED/ESD and have associated competencies fully incorporated into the teaching practices of countries across Asia and the Pacific, there needs to be clear indication of the economic and social return that these sorts of skills will provide at both the individual and national levels.

Any post-2015 target on GCED and ESD needs to be articulated clearly and succinctly – Some participants suggested that, in looking to 2015 and beyond, one clear and succinct target is necessary. During small group brainstorming sessions, one group proposed, 'By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and capabilities to promote GCED and ESD.' Subtargets, they argued, could then support such a target, across key areas of human rights, gender equality, peace and non-violence, and respect for cultural diversity. In addition, well-developed indicators would be necessary to support the acquisition of these competencies.

3.4 Teachers for the Future We Want

High quality teaching paves the way for high quality learning. Achieving all targets outlined in the Muscat Agreement, therefore, will be contingent on the extent of progress towards Target 6, which calls upon governments to ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers by 2030. During this thematic discussion on teachers, participants first reflected on what the Asia-Pacific region requires in order to achieve Target 6 of the Muscat Agreement, followed by discussions around: 1) competencies teachers need to meet the learning demands of 2030; 2) bottlenecks in attracting the best qualified candidates to the teaching profession, motivating teachers and transforming their pedagogical approaches, and 3) policies and enabling environments needed to ensure that teachers acquire and develop the competencies identified. The following is a summary of the key ideas and discussion points that emerged from the sessions.

3.4.1 Understanding Regional Challenges and Needs

The Importance of Enhancing Teacher Status

Participants felt that improving the social status of teachers was key to attracting the best candidates to become teachers and retaining them thereafter. Some participants expressed their view that teaching was a second choice option for graduates in their countries, with one noting that teaching was, in fact, 'the choice of last resort' for some. Participants thus called for targeted and coordinated human resource policies to improve teacher status, including the following:

- Participants agreed that teacher salary scales should be competitive with those of other professions, and that a performance-based salary system for teachers should be implemented in tandem with a proper evaluation and assessment mechanism for teacher performance. Some participants also commented that the ILO/UNESCO recommendations on teachers should be updated to reflect this.

- Participants also acknowledged the need to improve job security and other incentives for teachers. Job security was considered to be especially important for teachers in developing countries. With regard to incentives, examples included housing and insurance.

- Career progression and promotion were also identified as key areas of consideration in the professionalization of teachers in both formal and non-formal educational settings. Some participants

suggested that teachers should be given the opportunity to progress and assume other leadership and/or professional roles in the civil service. Throughout their careers, teachers should have the opportunity to move up the professional ladder as their experience and skill-sets deepen. Importantly, promotion should be based on performance.

The Need for Improved Professional Development Systems

To motivate teachers and ensure they continually seek to improve their teaching and subject knowledge skills, a professional development system for both pre- and in-service training needs to be carefully developed. Participants highlighted the need for a clear articulation of teacher professional development in teacher policies including the following:

- Teacher education curricula, both pre- and in-service, should be needs-based and flexible in order to ensure the provision of continuous and relevant teacher education.

- Participants highlighted the need for a formalized induction programme for all new teachers, even those that have been trained as teachers. In this context, it was also proposed that an international definition as to what constitutes a 'trained teacher' be developed by the international community to help guide sufficient induction and training programmes.

- Some participants also discussed the need to consider interventions that cater specifically to experienced teachers who have been in the education system for prolonged periods, as these teachers may be more reluctant to learn new technologies and teaching methodologies, and hence, may benefit most from additional motivations. There may be a need to help inspire these teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods.

- Apart from implementing specific programmes, some participants also urged governments to encourage a paradigm shift from that of 'all students can learn' to that of 'all people can learn', with the understanding that learning comes in different forms. This may help inculcate a teaching culture in which teachers are seen as 'learning professionals' who embrace continuous professional development.

- Participants considered teacher evaluation to be an essential part of the professional development system, and called for a well-defined system to measure teacher performance and appraisal, with some participants suggesting the need for community assessment to be included in the assessment system. A proper teacher accreditation and certification process was also identified as a key component of teacher evaluation systems in which standards for accreditation and certification should be based on required teacher competencies.

- Teachers' autonomy, creativity and participation in all phases of education are also important to promote enhanced motivation among teachers and encourage them to excel in their profession. This in turn helps promote the quality of teaching and learning within schools.

The Need for a Strengthened Support System

Apart from adequate training, participants emphasized the need for teachers to be well-supported while in service at schools, with one participant stressing that the school system 'should be designed to support, not punish teachers.' To adequately support teachers, systematic interventions at both school and policy levels are required with the following considerations:

- Ensuring an appropriate teacher workload was viewed as a critical area in need of improvement. Participants stressed that in many countries in Asia and the Pacific, teachers have to spend time outside of work for class preparation, in addition to the set number of teaching hours at school.

Teachers have also been increasingly entrusted with non-teaching responsibilities, such as the provision of administrative support. Participants thus called on governments to seriously consider if the current workload of teachers was impeding efforts to ensure that teachers are equipped to provide quality teaching. Teachers should also be given more time and opportunity for reflection, so that they remain motivated and directed in teaching well.

- Peer support was also identified as a key intervention that could reduce the sense of alienation that teachers may feel in their school system. To ensure that teachers felt adequately supported, participants suggested that governments and schools invest in teacher educators, such as mentors and facilitators, and establish peer support networks within schools and school clusters. Some participants added that these peer support networks could be divided by subject area expertise, with relevant subject specialists placed in each network so that teachers could turn to them when in need of consultation.

The Importance of Careful Teacher Placement

Another major issue identified was that of teacher placement. Participants raised examples of high performing countries in international assessments and noted that these countries successfully allocated their best teachers to the most difficult and most disadvantaged areas. At the same time, many developing countries have found it difficult to place teachers in disadvantaged areas and schools, especially where language barriers are involved. Participants suggested that more teachers be recruited from ethnic minority groups and be given the commensurate training and support required to succeed as teachers in their own communities. Participants also flagged the need to train teachers in inclusive education to match the staffing and the diverse learning needs of students.

Considering the Financial Implications of Designing Teacher Policy

Participants highlighted that while most governments understood the centrality of teachers to quality education, many did not have well-defined teacher policies, while other policies fail due to the financial constraints. Some participants called for greater government accountability for investing more in teachers. However, others expressed concern for the fact that teachers are the most expensive economic input to the education system, and that there is a need to consider feasibility and affordability issues when discussing and designing teacher policy.

3.4.2 Key Strategies and Priorities for Teachers

Across the Asia-Pacific region, we can agree almost unequivocally – as discussions revealed – on the need for key regional indicators, including those measuring: (1) the presence of conducive working conditions and a supportive environment to attract top candidates and retain high performing teachers in the teaching profession; (2) the presence of national competency standards for teachers at all levels, and the availability of relevant and appropriate training and professional development opportunities for teachers; and (3) the establishment of effective school leadership and management practices to implement relevant policies and practices so that teachers can focus on their core responsibility of teaching. During this thematic session, participants built upon these three sets of indicators and collectively proposed the following:

The Need for Improved Teacher Accreditation – To this end, the establishment of a national independent professional body to develop and oversee professional standards and accreditation of teachers at all levels (from ECCE to post-secondary education, including TVET and HE) and in all sectors (formal and non-formal) by 2030 was proposed. This independent professional body should include teachers and take into consideration the voices and opinions of teachers in the development of standards and accreditation systems.

The Identification of Competency Standards – This could involve the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national competency standards for teachers and school leaders at all levels (ECCE to post-secondary education, including TVET and HE) and in all sectors (formal and non-formal) so as to guide teacher development at all stages of the teacher career ladder, from pre-service to in-service training. The term 'implementation' here includes the incorporation of national competency standards into the teacher curriculum, the provision of continuous training and the rewarding of acquired competencies. In parallel, such a standard could lead to the development of a comprehensive national teacher performance appraisal system.

Adequate Financial Allocation to Teachers – This involves the careful earmarking of resources to support pre- and in-service teacher development, as well as ensuring competitive teacher salary scales. This also includes the provision of sufficient ICT and teaching tools for teacher education and teaching practices in order to enhance innovative pedagogy to support the future of learning in 2030.

3.5 Governance and Financing

Governance and financing are of crucial importance to the achievement of education goals beyond 2015. In order to ensure that all learners have access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities by 2030, responsible and participatory governance is required in order to build transparent and accountable education systems, as well as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation. Importantly, better sector management and governance systems at the global, national and local levels need to be complemented with sufficient, efficient and equitable financing drawn from multiple sources.

This session was divided into two parts: Part A showcased country presentations from Tonga, Vanuatu and Thailand, which elaborated on policy experiences, practices and challenges in education governance and financing. The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), a non-governmental organization, also shared its findings on public-private partnerships. Part B consisted of group discussions centred around: 1) foreseen governance challenges to the fulfilment of equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030, and 2) obstacles to sufficient, efficient and equitable education financing and balanced investment across education subsectors. Participants also discussed strategies to address these challenges and obstacles.

3.5.1 Education Governance

Throughout discussions, the issue of decentralization was substantively discussed and debated by participants. Some of the key ideas to emerge included the following:

- Decentralization reforms should be coupled with the necessary financial means for successful implementation. The reforms must also be sensitive to the nature of different governance areas, such as academic, budgeting, personnel, and administration.

- Decentralization must be suited to the local needs in the design of decentralization reforms. Country contexts based on principles of equity, accountability and flexibility must therefore be considered. Participants noted that the suitability of reforms determined the extent to which decentralization efforts were successful.

- Participants argued that the scope of decentralization should also include the transfer of some power to community and grassroots organizations, in addition to local government bodies.

- Strong accountability and monitoring mechanisms must be built into decentralization processes in order to mitigate risks associated with decentralization. Participants raised the examples of corruption and power abuse by local elites when given added authority. Forms of abuse include the siphoning of public monies and the hiring of relatives and cronies over more qualified candidates. Clear accountability regulations and structures must emanate from the central government, with monitoring conducted by both the central government, as well as local community stakeholders.

- Re-centralization may be optimal in some cases to restore and regain control over transparency and equitable service delivery.

- Regardless, in terms of financial administration, the fiscal roles of central and local governments must also be defined and clarified.

- Local capacity, particularly in the areas of financial management and school-based management, must be developed in tandem with decentralization efforts, so that local authorities and stakeholders are ready and capable of assuming the added responsibilities.

- Decentralization issues related to teacher and personnel policy were also discussed. Some participants noted that teacher recruitment and salary payment are highly centralized in the region, and suggested that a viable form of decentralization could be the recruitment of teachers by local institutions coupled with funding by central governments.

Other governance issues discussed included the following:

Necessity of long-term planning – In order to formulate effective policies that help realize the right to education across the citizenry, governments must strengthen long-term policy planning mechanisms, both in terms of developing technical capacity to plan ahead and in fostering a political culture in which governments are willing to choose viable long-term interventions over unsustainable quick fixes.

Monitoring mechanisms – While participants were in general agreement with the target proposed in the background note[17] for governance, some questioned the monitoring mechanisms related to this target. As one participant questioned, 'Which body will ensure that legal, accountability and transparency frameworks, as well as planning and monitoring mechanisms are in place?'

Data – Participants noted the importance of data quality and transparency for the purposes of effective monitoring. Proper EMIS frameworks, complete with data sharing mechanisms, should be developed so that the public can access the data and information. Some participants also highlighted the need for globalized data to be applicable to the country-level needs of education planning, while others

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17 The background note on Governance and Financing, which informed this discussion, is available at: http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/epr/ APREC/13_Background_Note_Governance_and_Financing.pdf In this instance, the background note proposed that by 2030, all countries put in place legal, accountability and transparency frameworks and institutionalize planning and monitoring mechanisms for a structured participation of diverse stakeholders in education governance from school to the national level.

suggested specific ways in which data systems could be used to counter educational challenges, including the establishment of performance management systems to address teacher absenteeism.

Participatory governance and stakeholder collaboration – Participants called for governments to enhance cooperation between state and non-state stakeholders, and across all government sectors and levels. They gave particular attention to the issues of civil society engagement and school level governance:

- Participants urged governments to encourage increased CSO participation in policy dialogue and implementation for improved policy interventions and delivery. Participants illustrated this need for non-state stakeholder involvement through one clear example: in the Asia-Pacific region, education budgets are mostly decided by central governments, which often fail to take into account local dynamics crucial to the implementation of education policy. Therefore, a mechanism reflecting demands at the local level, which informs and influences the budget-making process, is warranted.

- At the school level, participants also felt that enhanced citizen and civil society participation in school governance will improve education quality, and communities should be actively involved in the planning, budgeting and implementation of school activities for enhanced school governance and educational quality.

Evidence-based policy-making and evaluation – Participants cautioned against evaluating and revising policies solely on 'macro-level' indicators, such as the size of education budgets, and emphasized that local contexts and disaggregated 'micro' numbers, disaggregated by region and school, should also be considered for improved policy making and evaluation.

Efficacy of operating small schools – Small schools in remote areas face particular challenges as they tend to suffer from the lack of trained teachers and other resources, while they also need to conduct multigrade teaching. Participants shared dilemmas faced by their countries in keeping small schools open. For some countries, such as Thailand, school closure, even when economically efficient and educationally viable, remains a difficult political decision for local authorities in rural areas because such decisions result in job losses. As for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and countries with mountainous terrain like Nepal, closing small schools is hardly a feasible option, as this may mean that students have to walk long distances in potentially difficult conditions to get to the next school or not have schools to attend at all. The Marshall Islands explained its approach to overcoming the challenges of small schools. They mandate that staffing requirements provide one teacher per fifteen students and below, provide transportation for teachers, employ female teachers in male-dominated communities, and conduct in-service training to ensure that small schools have trained teachers despite difficult geographical limitations. In sum, participants identified the need to develop innovative ways to tackle the unique challenges of small schools.

3.5.2 Education Sector Financing

The discussion on financing was divided into three main areas: (1) domestic funding by governments, (2) contributions by non-state actors, and (3) international funding.

Domestic resource mobilization by governments

- Participants expressed their opinion that governments have the primary responsibility of providing basic education, and that other actors, such as international donors, the private sector and local communities should complement and not substitute the State. Many participants called for the establishment of clear indicators and targets, specifically that 20 per cent of the annual national budget and 6 per cent of GDP be allocated to education. They considered the lack of specific numerical targets in the Muscat Agreement as a step backwards from the Dakar Framework. Some participants went as far as to suggest that countries mandate these targets as constitutional requirements, as in the case of Indonesia, where the constitution stipulates that 20 per cent of public expenditure should go to education.

- There was also discussion about Target 7 in the Muscat Agreement. Pertaining to this target, participants preferred clear indicators and targets to be maintained, specifically that 20 per cent of the annual national budget and 6 per cent of GDP be allocated to education. Again, most thought the lack of specific numerical targets in the Muscat Agreement was a step backwards from the Dakar Framework.

- The equitable distribution of the education budget across subsectors and regions was also a key concern among participants, with many calling for wealthier regions to subsidize poorer ones, and for more of the education budget to be earmarked for marginalized groups and areas. Participants were, therefore, in favour of increased progressive taxation as a means to fill the financing gap, along with the abolition of value-added tax for education materials (given that this tax burdens the poor more than the rich).

- Participants also identified room for governments to increase education financing via tax policy by way of increasing the percentage of taxation earmarked for education and via innovative tax incentives. The example of the Education Cess in India, which finances almost 61 per cent of the country's education budget, was quoted. In terms of innovative tax policies, an example of the Philippines was raised, where local governments allocate taxes collected from local real estate property to a special education fund that is used in consultation with local communities. It was also proposed that countries offer more generous tax breaks for firms running corporate social responsibility projects on education.

- The efficacy of demand-side strategies was also actively discussed. Vanuatu presented its successful school grants programme, which offers children from rural areas free primary education, thereby enabling households to save up for their children's secondary schooling. A key success factor of the programme was the coupling of fund provision with capacity-building of the school leadership, so as to ensure that principals are trained in school-based management and can manage resources properly. The Vanuatu Government also promoted awareness of the programme among community stakeholders and involved them in programme monitoring. While demand-side strategies were recognized as useful interventions that could increase funding efficiency, some participants cautioned about the need to consider the effects of demand-side strategies on infrastructural and human resource requirements, including those of other subsectors, when undertaking education planning. Increased primary enrolment due to school grants, for example, would lead to the need for more teachers, classrooms and schools at the primary level, and at the secondary level in the near future (due to increased secondary enrolment). For SIDS, there are also specific challenges in using the funds given that some resources, such as school materials, may be located very far away from schools.

- School budgeting needs to reflect the socio-economic backgrounds of regions, schools and the student-body in order to promote equity in education delivery.

- Public expenditure reviews and tracking surveys need to be in place in order to assess the efficacy and efficiency of the system.

Private resource mobilization through public-private partnerships

- It was identified that there should be more clarity in the discussion of public-private partnerships (PPPs), given that the scope of PPPs is wide-ranging, for example, from community schools to private, for-profit ones. In particular, participants sought clarifications in the definition and roles of PPPs in financing education. One participant raised the case of firms building schools for their own agenda, irrespective of demand-side concerns, and questioned if such projects could be considered corporate social responsibility initiatives.

- Participants were concerned that PPPs may contribute to the lack of donor harmonization and unnecessary competition with donor projects – and emphasized that PPPs should be an additional or supplemental source of funding and not a replacement or substitute. Governments must ensure that the rise of PPPs does not diminish existing funding by other traditional sources of education financing such as governments and donors.

- The ways to attract PPPs were also discussed, with participants encouraging governments to enhance system efficiency and accountability in the use of resources so as to attract private enterprises. Some participants urged governments to look at education projects as 'products', and to ask the question, 'What can private enterprises gain from investing in this product?'

- Participants called for the establishment and strengthening of governance frameworks on PPPs, in order to ensure the efficiency and transparency of PPPs. Significantly, these governance frameworks should include mechanisms that encourage the equitable distribution of resources, given that PPPs tend to benefit urban more than rural areas.

- While acknowledging the potential of PPPs in supplementing the education budget, participants highlighted a few areas of caution when implementing PPPs:

  ◦ The organization of PPPs needs to be contextualized to cater to the country and local needs given that education systems in the Asia-Pacific region are diverse.

  ◦ Education plans and programming needs should be defined by governments, in consultation with stakeholders, using a bottom-up approach in the assessment of needs, and not by the private sector, even if the latter funds these projects.

  ◦ PPPs should be geared towards strengthening the capacity of public education systems rather than substituting them. ASPBAE, during its presentation, mentioned that private schools did not necessarily perform better than public schools once socio-economic factors were controlled for, and that interventions which focused on developing the capacity of government funded schools (via investments in curricular reforms and material development, teacher and school leadership training, etc.) and engaging community stakeholders were more cost-effective.

  ◦ PPPs should be systematic, and support coherent programmes that address the entire process from planning to implementation, rather than mere piecemeal 'gifts' from the private sector.

International funding

- There is a necessity for donors to recognize, reinforce, and build upon current financing mechanisms rather than establishing new ones. Existing frameworks and initiatives, such as the official development assistance (ODA) targets listed in the Dakar Framework and the Global Partnership for Education, should be strengthened, particularly for those countries most in need.

- Regarding targets, while some participants opined that donors should continue allocating 0.7 per cent of their GDP to ODA, some thought it would be difficult to agree upon specific numerical targets. Other participants pointed out the important need to consider the broader development context of a given country, rather than predetermining numerical ODA targets for specific sectors.

- Participants also requested that current donor funding mechanisms and data be clarified. For example, what are the mechanisms within the region through which high-income countries support low-income countries? How much donor funding is coming through these mechanisms? Are data available to determine whether we need more or less donor funding?

- Given the emergence of new international donors and increased South-South cooperation, new financing mechanisms in support of the new aid architecture must be explored. It should be noted, however, that these new mechanisms should neither duplicate nor substitute current mechanisms.

- While recognizing the importance of donor funding, participants urged countries to first utilize and expand sources of government financing before turning to external funding. Some pointed out that many low-income countries were too dependent on donor funding, which often comes with conditions such as the need to meet performance targets.

Chapter 4

Effective Implementation:
How Will We Get There?

Since 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action has provided guidance to the EFA movement. But now, fourteen years on, what key considerations must be made in building a new education framework? In light of the challenges befalling the EFA movement, one major consideration must be ensuring that the post-2015 education agenda is relevant to all countries, regardless of their economic profile or development status. In other words, how do we ensure that the global education development agenda resonates with the development objectives of all countries? Below are some key considerations raised during the plenary address on implementation strategies as regards the post-2015 education agenda.

The need for enhanced subregional collaboration

Enhanced subregional collaboration is especially relevant to the Asia-Pacific region, given that it is home to some of the world's richest countries, as well as some of the poorest and least developed. Countries within each of the five main subregions that comprise the region – Central Asia, East Asia, the Pacific, Southeast Asia, South and West Asia – share many similar development challenges and opportunities. During the APREC plenary session on strategies to implement the future education agenda, presenters and participants stressed that any new framework should serve to provide an overall vision, guiding principles and aspirational targets, while simultaneously recognizing that development priorities and contexts differ greatly from one subregion to another. In this context, increased flexibility in translating and implementing the global goals and targets is needed. This should, as some suggested, involve increased subregional coordination, collaboration and monitoring, as well as the adaptation of targets and indicators to subregional and national contexts. This also implies that the voice of national governments and local stakeholders must be fully reflected in setting and drawing the contours of the post-2015 education framework, particularly regarding its implementation at the national level.

The need for strengthened partnership

And what, as some questioned, can we assume will need to change in light of the significant focus now being placed on lifelong learning? Indeed the lifelong learning perspective, which has been strongly emphasized not only within the context of APREC, but also in the broader international debate around the future of education, underscores the critical need to ensure coordination and partnership not just between different educational levels and departments, but across different ministries; we simply cannot guarantee 'lifelong learning for all' by isolated policy measures introduced by education ministries. At the same time, presenters and participants acknowledged that the active engagement of civil society and non-state partners will also be a key implementation strategy in the context of lifelong learning. While this may be recognized within the post-2015 education framework, and while a well-developed mechanism for this may exist at the global level, similar systems will arguably need to be ensured at the regional, subregional and national levels.

Education as fundamental to national priorities for sustainable development

Education plays an undeniably significant role in the attainment of all development goals, from improving maternal health, to combating HIV/AIDS, to ensuring environmental sustainability. In articulating education within the broader development goals, therefore, presenters and participants stressed that education should be framed from a fundamental human rights perspective; we each have a right to learn, to enjoy a decent life and decent work and we must exercise that right. At the same time, in order to realize this fundamental right, we must refocus our efforts at the national and local levels. It is with governments and local actors that the ultimate responsibility rests. It is with governments and peoples' representatives that sustained commitment to ensuring and mobilizing domestic resources and ensuring the prioritization of education amongst other development concerns must be made. It is true that the governance of education has increasingly become a global issue, with a multitude of partners, initiatives and structures emerging. But within this complex landscape, we must ensure that local and national perspectives are not omitted.

Following on from the plenary address, discussions were categorized into subregional groupings (Central and East Asia, Southeast Asia, South and West Asia and the Pacific) which each focused on four key areas: policy and planning; coordination and partnerships; financing; and monitoring and evaluation. Throughout these discussions, overarching regional implementation priorities emerged, as well as certain subregional differences, differences that reflect the enormous diversity of the Asia-Pacific region. The following provides a summary of both overarching regional priorities, and subregional distinctions.

4.1 Overarching Regional Priorities

The Muscat Agreement calls for at least 15-20 per cent of national public expenditure (or 4–6 per cent of GDP) on education. Despite this, it was difficult across the subregions to strike agreement regarding the correct percentage of expenditure that should be allocated to education. Countries did agree, however, that given resources should be utilized more efficiently and effectively, that funding should prioritize those most in need, and that greater priority should be placed on issues of equity and equality in access and learning. But how is this to be achieved? Participants suggested that funding formula should carefully reflect the needs of underserved and less affluent sections of society, especially minorities and excluded groups. This requires a more sector-wide approach to education policy planning, the further disaggregation of data and expanded data collection efforts to help reveal disparities in access and learning. Such an approach will help ensure that disaggregated data are transparent and available to all relevant stakeholders.

Simultaneously, discussions revealed the underlying tensions associated with the coordination of education development efforts across different ministries and agencies, at the national, regional and international levels. Indeed, to achieve the overarching priority of equity and equality in access and learning, strengthening synergy between all development partners is crucial. But how is this to be achieved? Some suggested greater recognition and incorporation of regional dimensions of education planning into post-2015 development efforts, especially via regional platforms such as ASEAN. Some called for a better mapping of development partners at the national level and greater transparency and accessibility of education data sources. Others suggested ensuring that development partners are better versed on, and attentive to, the developmental aspirations of the countries themselves. Building stronger and more effective partnerships with CSOs and the private sector was also emphasized, particularly with regard to reaching the unreached.

While the post-2015 development agenda may lay the path to improved development outcomes, requiring stronger collaboration among all stakeholders, and while development partners stand ready to assist national governments in coordination efforts, tackling the multivariate challenges befalling education development ultimately requires greater action at the country level. In addition to the above points of shared priorities, points of differing focus emerged throughout the discussions in regard to the four key areas of policy and planning, coordination and partnerships, financing, and monitoring and evaluation. These points of diverging priorities are summarized below.

4.2 Emerging Subregional Priorities

4.2.1 Policy and Planning

When it comes to policy and planning, what important considerations must be made to ensure the effective implementation of the post-2015 development agenda?

- For participants of Central and East Asia, it was felt that some countries were already well ahead on many of the proposed post-2015 education development targets. Nonetheless, some targets, such as the free provision of universal ECCE, remained outstanding. The region also reflected the rise of new challenges, such as online education and learning, which requires effective policy planning and regulation for quality assurance. Therefore, it was argued that the subregional monitoring of common challenges in the respective subregion might be more relevant and useful for achieving targets.

- This was in contrast to discussions in Southeast Asia. There, some countries acknowledged that while achieving ECCE was an admirable ideal, it would invariably not be possible to achieve in all countries given budgetary and human resource limitations. What emerged strongly in most countries is the increasing need for national policy and planning to consider the implications of the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

- In South and West Asia, discussion focused on the dire need to formulate specific national plans of action to implement the post-2015 agenda, and to integrate these plans within the educational sector plans and national education policies. To this end, it was acknowledged that national coordinators for EFA and the EFA forum at national levels had been useful, and that for post-2015, a revitalization of these sorts of fora may be helpful.

- In the Pacific, participants suggested that critical to improved policy and planning at all levels would be the prioritization of education in terms of funding, and the fundamental role of governments, through political will, to affect change.

4.2.2 Coordination and Partnerships

With regard to coordination and partnerships, what important priorities exist across the regions?

- In Central and East Asia, it was emphasized that regional level coordination could be improved, including via formalized measures, especially with regard to emerging donors. Utilizing the experience of UNESCO Category II Institutes across East Asia, as well as subregional ministerial meetings, were also proposed.

- In Southeast Asia, conversation centred on the need for enhanced harmonization of educational qualifications across ASEAN countries and stronger partnerships with regional bodies such as ASEAN and SEAMEO. In addition, it was felt that there is a need to strengthen coordination between ministries and development partners, as well as among countries. As one participant remarked, 'We are not building educational programmes from scratch – we can and must learn from the best practices within our region including from CSOs and other partners.'

- In South and West Asia, the importance of utilizing existing regional platforms, such as SAARC, to help build better partnerships and maximize coordination was emphasized. While the role of CSOs and the private sector also was recognized as important in this subregion, some acknowledged that the 'trust deficit' needs to be bridged through transparent regulatory frameworks. To this end, one participant remarked, 'There is a need to move from a command and control regime to a connect and collaborate realm.'

- Participants of the Pacific discussion reflected on the importance of ministries of education as the lead actors in building partnerships and coordination. Simultaneously, however, it was felt that education data and statistics need to be available to all stakeholders, including CSOs, so that more targeted action may be possible.

4.2.3. Financing

In light of financial commitments proposed in the Muscat Agreement, what financial priorities do the subregions of Asia and the Pacific consider important?

- In Central and East Asia, participants acknowledged the disparities among nations in terms of educational expenditure. While participants felt that it might not be necessary to set a stringent expenditure level, they agreed that there could be a universal minimum expenditure benchmark, which could be contextualized based on the countries' education and development needs. The need for regulatory frameworks was also acknowledged to help ensure quality and prevent broadening inequalities.

- While governments of Southeast Asian countries are recognized as the ultimate bearers of educational financing, there is a need to recognize the proliferation of non-State financiers, especially given the great interest in private corporate social responsibility (CSR). Some participants suggested that governments should 'cross-subsidize' between provinces, countries and regions so that richer areas can help support poorer areas.

- In contrast to Central and East Asia, in South and West Asia it was argued that there is a need for strong advocacy at both the international and national levels to help ensure sufficient allocation of resources, including the proposed 6 per cent of GDP. Participants also argued that while innovative financing is important to education development, it should not shift the burden to those who are already disadvantaged. It was also argued that the prioritization of resources to underserved populations was an important budgetary priority.

- The Pacific group supported the call for 6 per cent of GDP, as well as 20 per cent of the national budget for education. To this end, participants suggested a push for legislation around the proposed minimum levels of expenditure to help ensure commitment. In addition, it was recognized that core funding and targeted funding need to be spent on marginalized groups. To reach marginalized populations, it was felt that funding should be seen not only in dollar amounts; different kinds of aid, such as capacity development and teacher training are particularly important for many countries of this subregion.

4.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

How do countries of the region expect the monitoring and evaluation of education development outcomes to be effectively implemented?

- In Central and East Asia, it was suggested that cooperation between all stakeholders was important in the production and utilization of data. In addition, it was recognized that clearly defining the purpose of data collection would make it possible to improve policy monitoring. Participants agreed that data need to be further disaggregated and that governments need to open data up for all to help ensure stronger partnership in monitoring and evaluation processes.

- In Southeast Asia, it was felt that there is a need to build strong monitoring and accountability systems at the community and school levels so as to strengthen community-school relationships and ensure improved community oversight of schools. Hence, fostering 'horizontal accountability' rather than just 'vertical accountability' was considered important. Similar to Central and East Asia, it was felt that data should also be more disaggregated, and that greater transparency and accessibility of data would strengthen the monitoring of education outcomes.

- In South and West Asia, the importance of verifiable data, including data through EMIS, was strongly emphasized. Education standing committees in national and subnational legislatures could help to ensure optimal resource utilization. Some suggested that instead of summative monitoring, there should also be a regular system of formative monitoring to keep organizations on a learning curve.

- Within discussion in the Pacific, participants felt that it was important to consider the needs of different stakeholders and different schools in providing data to central ministries. It was also stressed that human resources need sufficient training, that support from donors and agencies in monitoring and evaluation was important, particularly regarding the strengthening of data production mechanisms and identifying what specific data are necessary to collect and analyze. It was also suggested that regular reporting on education be carried out biannually, and that all stakeholders be engaged in this reporting mechanism as part of any monitoring and evaluation system.

Chapter 5

Regional Voices:
Our Visions for the Future

The Ministerial Forum on Education Beyond 2015, the third day of the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference, brought together the education ministers, vice-ministers and country delegates from 37 countries to help build consensus around priority areas for the Asia-Pacific region in the lead up to 2015. While the Bangkok Statement (see Annex IA), the culmination of both the Regional Dialogue on Education for All and Beyond and the Ministerial Forum, reflects a joint regional voice on the future of education, reflection on Day Three focused explicitly on the perspectives and concerns of education ministry officials across the region. This section provides an overview of those reflections.

From the outset, there was acknowledgement of the upbeat mood of this conference, especially compared to what was described as the 'sobering reality' of education development in Jomtien, almost 25 years ago, when the EFA movement was first initiated. At that time, even access to basic education was a major development challenge for many countries. Today, the education development agenda has broadened significantly, as reflected in the drive toward lifelong learning for all and in the achievements already made, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, a region that has in many ways led by example. This is not to suggest that ministers sat back and rejoiced in their achievements. Rather, ministers, vice-ministers and delegates acknowledged with pride the achievements made and with humility looked to the challenges remaining, challenges which must, as they argued, be reflected in the construction of the post-2015 agenda through carefully crafted targets and indicators.

While international organizations, such as UNESCO, serve to carry the discussion forward, it is ultimately the responsibility of national governments to ensure that their voices and concerns are heard at the global level. At the same time, the UNESCO Bangkok Office Director acknowledged that development challenges facing countries of the region are no longer challenges to be viewed in isolation. APREC reaffirmed, both symbolically and through the sentiments expressed, that collective commitment from across the region is driving education development forward. 'What challenges we face as individual countries are challenges we face together', he reminded all, 'especially in this increasingly interconnected world.'

During this session, education ministers, deputy ministers and country delegates exchanged views on the key challenges facing education within the Asia-Pacific region, as well as their views and visions for the future of education. Throughout this session, a number of key points were raised by country representatives that reflected both the areas of current national priority and the areas of identified concern. In his summation of this session, the UNICEF Deputy Regional Director noted that the views of education leaders of the region were found to be in strong convergence with the overarching goal to 'ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030' as laid out in the Muscat Agreement. To achieve this goal, however, the concerns and priorities expressed by education leaders need to be addressed, many of which can be summarized as follows.

1 Improving access to ECCE and basic education

Participants from several countries reflected on the need for stronger investment in ECCE as the foundation for learning and development, and simultaneously, for ensuring the completion of primary and secondary education. The need to ensure greater focus on ECCE was reflected in the statement from Bangladesh, in the concerns around ECCE quality in the Maldives and in the programmes already established in Vanuatu. For Nauru and Niue, ensuring free and compulsory education from pre-school through to lower secondary was also highlighted as an important priority. Increasing compulsory education to age sixteen was also acknowledged as a priority in Sri Lanka. The persistent issue of out-of-school children was specifically acknowledged by representatives of some countries, such as Afghanistan where conflict continues to limit access, and Iran given its significant population of refugees and displaced persons. In Malaysia, advancing mother tongue-based instruction was recognized as crucial, and in Myanmar, the importance of increasing access in rural and remote areas was flagged. Nepal, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Pakistan and Vanuatu all expressed the importance of accelerating broader access to education, particularly considering the expanded definition of basic education that is increasingly being adopted. In this context, the importance of lifelong learning as a cornerstone to economic and human development was emphasized.

2 Ensuring an equity-based approach

In order to improve access to education, major bottlenecks need to be addressed. Across the region, some of these bottlenecks to school access, completion and achievement include: household poverty, remoteness, disability, marginalization based on ethnicity and/or caste, conflicts and natural disasters. Almost all countries participating in this session acknowledged the importance of addressing inequalities, most notably the Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, India, Pakistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam. For the Marshall Islands, Myanmar and Nepal, alternative education was acknowledged as an important tool in bridging the urban-rural equity divide. For Samoa, moves to open schools later in the day to help attract out-of-school children, and the provision of evening TVET programmes for all youth, students and adults, were mentioned. In the Solomon Islands, addressing the issue of school fees, and in Timor Leste, expanding mother-tongue-based learning and creating an Inclusive Learning Department, were mentioned.

3 Improving the quality of learning and teaching

Governments and partners should ensure the quality of learning through improving facilities/ schools, curricula and employing child-centred learning approaches. These should focus not just on literacy and numeracy, but also on holistic learning. To this end, the quality of teachers and teacher training should also be improved, with focus on strong standards, teacher management systems and continuing professional improvements. This sentiment was reflected in almost all statements, most notably by Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Sri Lanka, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Thailand. A number of countries, including Samoa and Sri Lanka, expressed the importance of 'holistic learning' and the mismatch between education and employment. With regard to quality, a great number of countries recognized that improving teacher training and teacher colleges should be paramount, including in Vanuatu and Thailand. Viet Nam listed improving the quality of education, in terms of life skills, practical ability, language skills and technological capabilities, as one of three fundamental challenges.

4 Stronger emphasis on education for global citizenship and sustainable development

As perhaps an extension of the call for enhanced quality and more 'holistic learning', countries referenced the need for greater attention to education for global citizenship, peace and sustainable development. This was described by various delegations to encompass a variety of values, such as co-existence and peace-building skills, spiritual development, 'strengthening of the moral compass', language and national identity, lifestyle skills and self-reliance. For the Republic of Korea, in particular, the need for quality education based on the recognition of, and appreciation for, fundamental human rights and as a driver of happiness was emphasized. The concept of 'Learning to Live Together' was reiterated, particularly in the context of rapid social and demographic changes. There is a common need to adjust to new circumstances and new realities, to be members of a global community so that a more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable future would be possible. In this context, Japan reaffirmed the importance of continued ESD approaches and noted the ESD conference in Nagoya in November 2014.

5 Ensuring adequate resources for education development

Adequate resources should be made available for education development primarily from national budgets. At the same time, countries reiterated the importance of strong partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations, as well as support from multilateral and bilateral partners, especially for low-income countries. Bangladesh acknowledged the need to expand their budget as a percentage of GDP, while Myanmar referred to their three-fold increase in their national education budget over the past two years. The importance of ensuring adequate resources for education development was also captured by Papua New Guinea, which acknowledged the invaluable international support provided for training teachers, noting that by 2016 an additional 6000 teachers will have been trained as a result of international partnerships. Pacific countries, including Nauru, Niue and Samoa, called for further international financial support given the challenges associated with catering for dispersed smaller populations.

6 Improved benchmarks for governance, coordination and coherence

The post-2015 agenda must develop strong benchmarks for governance, coordination, accountability and coherence within and between governments, as well as with external development partners. To this end, clear targets and indicators will be critical. In addition, it was felt that addressing these targets must involve the collective efforts of countries, development partners and the private sector working together more effectively. The Solomon Islands pointed out that although this conference had brought together education officials from such a diversity of countries, it was still not entirely clear how coordination in achieving enhanced education development across the region could be more effectively managed. The suggestion to consider regional development strategies was thus put forward in the context of the post-2015 agenda. The need to work more closely together was also reflected by Indonesia and Timor Leste, both of whom suggested that there was much pride and value to be found in regional cooperation and that strong benchmarks for governance, coordination and accountability could be tackled more effectively through unified action.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference provided a critical regional platform to reflect on challenges and future priorities for education development in a uniquely diverse region. It allowed for the formulation of regional inputs to help shape the future of education based on EFA experiences. Throughout this conference, participants representing 37 Member States and Associate Member States of UNESCO, 10 United Nations and intergovernmental organizations, 43 civil society organizations, businesses, national institutes and centres, and individual experts shared their thoughtful deliberations over the course of three days.

The conference demonstrated the need for a future education development agenda that places strong focus on universal relevance, that is, an agenda that serves the needs and priorities of both developed and developing countries, and one that accommodates diversity in aspirations and governance structures. All in all, discussions reflected the importance of both tackling the remaining EFA challenges and continuing to expect more from education in the 21st Century. Participants called for a greater commitment to achieve lifelong learning for all, to ensure educational equity and equality, to provide the necessary skills and competencies for life and work, to improve the quality of learning and teaching, to strengthen education governance and financing, and to strengthen regional partnerships across the Asia-Pacific region.

Given the development challenges that still remain – including addressing the issue of out-of-school children at the primary level as part of the unfinished EFA agenda – achieving these objectives will be no small feat. At the same time, our ability to tackle the unfinished EFA agenda will only be strengthened by our broadened and multifaceted commitment to education development, particularly through the strengthening of regional partnerships and the cementing of education as a fundamental component and driver of the post-2015 development agenda. Our past experience of rapid economic growth and social transformation through leveraging investment in education gives us the ambition to go a step further and to aim at quality lifelong learning for all in order to address emerging challenges, including peace, sustainable economic growth, demographic changes, climate change and environmental degradation.

The process to determine the post-2015 education goals, targets and strategies will culminate at the World Education Forum 2015, in Incheon, Republic of Korea. Ultimately, the post-2015 development goals will be adopted at the UN Summit to be held in New York in September 2015. It is hoped that this report, which provides a summary of the discussions throughout the three days of APREC deliberations, will help determine education development priorities based on the experiences and perspectives of the Asia-Pacific region. May our deliberations and our collaboration as part of this historic gathering help ultimately to improve the lives of all people through education.

Annex IA

Asia-Pacific Statement on Education Beyond 2015 (Bangkok Statement)

Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference

Bangkok, Thailand, 6–8 August 2014

Preamble

1. We, Ministers of Education, high-level government officials and representatives of civil society organizations, teachers' organizations, United Nations (UN) agencies, development partners, and members of academia and the private sector, gathered in Bangkok, Thailand at the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference from 6 to 8 August 2014. We thank the Ministry of Education of Thailand for hosting this important event.

2. Having taken stock of the progress made in the region in achieving the six Education for All (EFA) goals, having examined the remaining challenges, and having reflected on future priorities and strategies for the Asia-Pacific region to achieve the emerging post-2015 education agenda, we adopt the present statement. Our deliberations were built on the national EFA reviews, the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting (Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2014), and the Outcome Document of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals.

3. We fully endorse the vision, principles and targets laid out in the Muscat Agreement, noting that the overarching goal to 'ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030' reflects the aspiration of the region for education and development.

Asia-Pacific Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Agenda

4. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right for all children, young people and adults, and an essential condition for peace and inclusive and sustainable development. We also reiterate the importance of education in promoting human rights, human development, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity. We agree that education is essential to inclusive growth, as well as happiness, well-being and prosperity for all in Asia and the Pacific.

5. Since the birth of the EFA movement 25 years ago in Jomtien, Thailand, the Asia-Pacific region has made remarkable progress towards achieving the EFA agenda. Investment and overall progress in education have contributed to rapid economic growth and social transformation. At the same time, we recognize that the agenda remains unfinished. This is the impetus for an expanded vision of Education for All and for meeting persisting and emerging challenges, including demographic changes, migration, climate change, environmental degradation and the technological divide.

Regional Priority Action Areas

6. Lifelong learning for all

Equitable and inclusive access to quality learning should be ensured for all – children, youth and adults – at all levels of education, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to tertiary education, in both formal and non-formal settings. ECCE plays a crucial role in building strong foundations for learning and development. We strongly recommend the provision of 12 years of free and compulsory education for all by 2030. While every effort should be made to ensure that all children have access to quality learning opportunities in school, alternative learning pathways should also be supported and recognized. Given persistent low levels of adult literacy in some parts of the region, in particular among women, we are determined to ensure functional literacy for all from the perspective of lifelong learning.

7. Equity and equality

We commit ourselves to addressing all forms of marginalization, as well as disparities and inequalities, especially gender inequality, in access to education and learning processes and outcomes, including in conflict and crisis situations. The needs of people with disabilities should be addressed at all levels of education. Focused and effective actions including reform must be taken to make education pluralistic, to remove barriers to equal opportunities and to level the playing field for those who are disadvantaged and/or marginalized.

8. Skills and competencies for life and work

In light of socio-economic and demographic transformations, not least of which are shifting labour markets, all learners should acquire relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for decent work and entrepreneurship. In addition, they should acquire skills and competencies that allow them to be more creative and innovative, to think critically, to communicate effectively, to solve problems independently, and to be able to adapt to and assimilate change. Such knowledge, skills, values and attitudes should be developed so as to enable all children, youth and adults to enjoy secure lives, participate actively and responsibly in their communities, embrace diversity, live and work together harmoniously, and contribute to peaceful and sustainable development through Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

9. Quality and teachers

Quality learning is a priority for the region and teachers are central to quality learning. Efforts must be made at all levels and in all educational settings to ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated, committed and well-supported teachers who use appropriate pedagogical approaches. Quality in education will be supported also by learning environments that are safe, healthy, gender-sensitive, inclusive and conducive to learning, mother tongue-based multilingual education, and comprehensive monitoring and quality assurance systems.

10. **Information and communication technologies (ICTs) for education**

The effective and responsible use of ICTs in education is crucial to enable learners and teachers to adequately respond to the world of change. We will develop and utilize innovative educational platforms that improve access to education, in particular in remote areas, enhance the quality of learning that is responsive to diverse needs at all levels, and strengthen education management. We will ensure that ICTs are fully utilized to achieve the post-2015 education agenda.

11. **Governance and financing**

We are determined to establish legal and policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency, and enhance the participation of all stakeholders at all levels of the system. Government is the primary duty bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education, but funding can also be drawn from multiple sources, and there should be an enhanced focus on innovative financing strategies that do not burden the poor and that support quality public education. Public investment should help address the equitable distribution of resources across education subsectors and geographic locations, and targeted programmes to support marginalized groups. We strongly recommend reaching the internationally recognized benchmarks of 6 per cent of gross domestic product and/or 20 per cent of total public expenditure for education. While emphasizing that strong domestic financing is the key to success, we also recommend wider development partners to increase and better target their aid to education, including official development assistance (ODA). We ask that international financing mechanisms, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in particular, support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda according to the needs and priorities of the respective countries.

Towards the World Education Forum 2015

12. We request UNESCO, along with UNICEF, and with the support of the other EFA co-convening agencies, civil society, and other international and regional partners, to continue leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda, and the development of the corresponding Framework for Action. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to lead, coordinate and provide technical support for the implementation and monitoring of the future education agenda.

13. We pledge to promote the future education agenda in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. We will also work to ensure that the outcomes of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development to be held in Nagoya, Aichi, Japan, on 10–12 November 2014, are taken into account in the future education agenda. We will ensure that the education goal and targets of the global post-2015 development agenda to be adopted by the UN Summit in September 2015 are fully aligned with the education agenda that will be adopted at the World Education Forum to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea on 19–22 May 2015. To this end, we will actively participate in future consultations, and will facilitate and coordinate the debates in our respective countries.

Annex IB

Commentaries on the Asia-Pacific Statement on Education Beyond 2015
(Bangkok Statement)

In order to prepare the text of the Asia-Pacific Statement on Education Beyond 2015 (Bangkok Statement) for adoption by the Conference, a Drafting Group was established. In forming the group, fair representation of all subregions and development partners was required. In this regard, the Drafting Group members were selected based on the composition of Electoral Group IV (Asia-Pacific) of the Executive Board for 2013–2015, and key education development partners in the region.

The Drafting Group consisted of delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, and Thailand. Delegates from Niue and Fiji represented the Pacific Member States. Education International and Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) represented non-governmental and civil society organizations as EFA Steering Committee members, and ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank also took part. Staff members from UNESCO HQ and UNICEF New York contributed advice as resource persons, and the secretariat provided by UNESCO Bangkok coordinated and assisted the work of the Drafting Group.

The first draft of the Bangkok Statement was prepared by the Drafting Group members prior to the Conference through online discussion. The Drafting Group met once before the Conference and a number of times throughout the course of the Conference to discuss, revise and finalize the draft. As it was not possible to fully include in the two-page text the various points raised in the rich, multi-faceted and complex debates that the group members had in those meetings, the Drafting Group decided to supplement the Bangkok Statement with commentaries. The following text is meant to serve as this supplement by providing commentaries on the paragraphs of the Statement.

Paragraph 4

The post-2015 education agenda should be universally relevant. It should promote and strengthen key and fundamental education development agenda that matters for all education systems regardless of race, gender, creed, religion, etc. [*The Pacific*]

Paragraph 6 – Lifelong learning for all

'12 years of free and compulsory education' is meant to focus on 12 years of primary and secondary education. Countries may choose to provide at least one year of compulsory early childhood care and education. 'Functional literacy' should include basic life skills such as ICT literacy. [*Republic of Korea*]

Paragraph 7 – Equity and equality

'Those who are disadvantaged and/or marginalized' include those affected by poverty, those with disabilities, those belonging to minority ethnic and linguistic groups, indigenous peoples, those who live in remote areas and informal settlements, those displaced by conflict or natural disasters, those who are stateless, migrants, or in child labour, and those who suffer from discrimination on the basis of gender, nationality, religion, or caste. *[Drafting Group]*

The 'disadvantaged and/or marginalized' should be described further, such as learners with disabilities, learners living in areas that are not normally accessible to educational service, post-conflict and post-disaster victims, refugees and displaced persons, 'drop-outs' and out-of-school children. Various opportunities should be made available to 'those who are disadvantaged and/or marginalized' to increase educational access and quality. Statistical data for monitoring equity and equality should be gathered and managed to effectively reach those who are not receiving adequate education. *[Republic of Korea]*

Paragraph 8 – Skills and competencies for life and work

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) should ensure that identities are not submerged in the conglomeration of global agenda. *[The Pacific]*

Definitions of GCED and ESD should be included, for example:

Global citizenship education aims to equip learners with the following core competences:

- A deep knowledge of global issues and universal values such as justice, equality, dignity and respect;
- Cognitive skills to think critically, systemically and creatively, including adopting a multi-perspective approach that recognizes different dimensions, perspectives and angles of issues;
- Non-cognitive skills, including social skills such as empathy and conflict resolution, and communicative skills and aptitudes for networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures and perspectives;
- Behavioural capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly, and to strive for collective good.[18] *[Republic of Korea]*

Paragraph 9 – Quality and teachers

Quality teachers are central to quality learning. Multiple and inter-connected factors have an impact on teachers' performance and student learning outcomes. Of particular importance to producing quality teachers are: (i) ensuring conducive working conditions, such as providing adequate and on-time remuneration, planning time, a collaborative environment, and taking steps to improve the status of teachers, and (ii) continuous professional development that begins with quality pre-service teacher education and training. Efforts must be made at all levels from ECCE through to higher education, including non-formal settings and vocational institutions, to ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated, competent and well-supported teachers. Enabling environments should be built to support teachers to acquire and develop competencies to facilitate learning and anticipate the future requirements. Quality learning also requires a quality-learning environment, especially in conflict areas and for girls and women. Schools require relevant, safe and updated facilities, learning materials and tools to create an environment conducive to learning. Innovative strategies need to be developed to support learning and diversify the channels for learning within and beyond school settings. *[Education International]*

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18 Outcome document of the Technical Consultation on Global Citizenship Education "Global Citizenship Education: An Emerging Perspective" Available at: (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002241/224115E.pdf). For ESD, see: 37th General Conference approved Global Action Programme on ESD

Targeted curriculum and support for teachers to accommodate the learning needs of students who have migrated from other countries should be established. Multilingual education should be established, strengthened and supported through innovative curriculum strategies to meet the demand and pressure due to population movement. UNESCO should promote, or assist in, the translation of education curricula into students' mother tongue. This will demonstrate UNESCO's role in the preservation of languages and cultures. A strategy to constantly review and improve teachers' professional standards and competency to meet all the learning needs of students at pre-determined intervals should be included. Training for teachers to teach learners with specific learning needs should be streamlined. *[The Pacific]*

In order to enable learners to 'acquire skills and competencies that allow them to be more creative and innovative, to think critically… ,' teachers should be motivated and trained to be innovative educators to catalyze self-led change and innovation in the classroom. Teachers should have critical problem solving skills, social capabilities, flexibility, ICT literacy, and ethical and moral values, in order to lead the 21st Century classroom. *[Republic of Korea]*

Paragraph 10 – Information and communication technologies (ICTs) for education

The use of ICTs in education should enhance the delivery of the curriculum in schools and raise the productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of education management in support of the curriculum. *[The Pacific]*

'Innovative educational platforms' should include collective education policies that integrate infrastructure, teachers, curriculum, contents, and EMIS as a whole. An emphasis should be placed on ICT for education as a cross-cutting methodology that includes basic to higher education, teacher training, education policies, educational methodology, lifelong learning, and TVET. The adverse and side effects of ICT in the information society should be highlighted. The effects of computer games, online addiction, online violence, and information pollution to learners should be considered, as well as the fostering of a safe and responsible ICT educational environment. [*Republic of Korea*]

Paragraph 11 – Governance and Financing

'Stakeholders' should be further defined with examples. Also, cooperation between countries should be highlighted, such as exchange programmes between schools and civil society cooperation. The capacities and achievements of learners should be continuously monitored. Evidence-based policy-making is needed for effective and reliable educational management. Administrative transparency, such as public disclosure of information, should be emphasized and based on significant education data management. Civil society should be able to understand information related to education institutions and support evidence-based policy-making. *[Republic of Korea]*

UNESCO has been advocating for a financing target to ensure sufficient funding for education for a long time. This has been expressed repeatedly in the final statements and declarations of the EFA high-level

group meetings.[19] The information on educational financing provided by the Assistant Director-General for Education during APREC draws upon data from the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2013/14 (available at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/ efareport/reports/2013/) which states that 'globally, the amount devoted to education rose from 4.6% of gross national product (GNP) in 1999 to 5.1% in 2011.' It further states that 'of the 150 countries with data, 41 spent 6% or more of GNP on education in 2011' (p.113). Globally, 15 per cent of government expenditure was directed to education in 2011, and out of 138 countries, 25 countries spent more than 20 per cent in 2011 (p.114). The GMR recommends that an explicit target be set for the post-2015 education agenda with countries allocating at least 6 per cent of GNP to education, and at least 20 per cent of their budget to education (p. 114). *[UNESCO]*

Between Paragraph 11 and Paragraph 12 – Regional Recommendations on the Implementation Strategies

The Drafting Group agreed to entirely move the section entitled 'Regional Recommendations on the Implementation Strategies," which existed after the section entitled 'Regional Priority Action Areas,' from the Bangkok Statement to its supplement. This section included the following paragraphs.

We suggest the following elements for the international and regional strategies to comprise the thrust of the Framework for Action to support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda.

i) The primary responsibility to achieve the post-2015 education goal and targets lies with national governments. At the same time, making the agenda a reality requires the full support and involvement of all – learners, communities, teachers, civil society, academia, the private sector, cultural institutions, religious groups, the media, international and regional organizations and entities, etc. The post-2015 education agenda must be owned by all and pursued as a shared vision with responsibility by all from the community level to the national, regional and international levels. Governments shall involve all stakeholders in the design and provision of quality, equitable and inclusive education programmes.

ii) In the context of increasing regional integration and cooperation among countries in the region, and in light of the fact that education is increasingly debated as a transnational issue beyond national boundaries, regional organizations should strengthen their role in facilitating mutual support and cooperation among countries to improve national education systems. Regional and subregional communities and organizations, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Pacific Islands Forum Education Ministers' Meeting (FEdMM), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SOC), the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation provide important fora to support education reform. Other modalities of international cooperation, such as the E-9 forum, can also support regional cooperation, while regional civil society organizations and networks can continue to proactively facilitate regional cooperation.

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19 The most recent declarations call for 6 per cent of GNP and/or 20 per cent of public expenditure for education. For example, the Jomtien Statement (Tenth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, 22-24 March 2011, Jomtien, Thailand, available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001919/191931E. pdf), and the Addis Ababa Declaration (Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23-25 February 2010, available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001871/187149E.pdf). Earlier declarations which call for an increase of domestic financing for education are the Oslo Declaration (Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, Oslo, Norway, 16-18 December 2008, available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001794/179421E.pdf), the Communiqué of the Seventh Meeting of the High Level Group on Education for All, Dakar, Senegal, 11-13 December 2007 (available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001560/156099e.pdf), and the Communiqué of the Sixth Meeting of the High Level Group on EFA, 14-16 November 2006, Cairo, Egypt (available at http://www.unesco.org/education/HLG2006/Communique22Nov.pdf). Also, the participants of CONFINTEA VI, Belém, Brazil, 1-4 December 2009, which included 144 Member States, committed to 'accelerating progress towards achieving the CONFINTEA V recommendation to seek investment of at least 6 per cent of GNP in education, and working towards increased investment in adult learning and education' (Page 7 of the Belém Framework for Action, available at http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UIL/confintea/pdf/News/belemframework_trilingual_online.pdf).

iii) The achievement of post-2015 education targets will require refined impact indicators and closer and timelier monitoring that enables countries to strengthen their education management, develop relevant policies and supportive strategies, and deliver appropriate interventions. Establishing a mechanism for regular reporting of the progress at the subnational and national levels is recommended. Measures should also be taken to improve the quality and transparency of data collection, analysis and dissemination. To reinforce monitoring and accountability on equity and equality targets, countries need to produce more appropriately disaggregated data. UNESCO and other international and regional partners, especially UNICEF, should facilitate countries' efforts to improve the quality of their education monitoring.

iv) Global goals are implemented through regional, national and local action in specific contexts. Countries will be encouraged to prioritize, adapt, and adjust global targets, benchmarks and indicators for national and subnational contexts, giving special attention to disadvantaged groups and areas, going beyond global goals and targets where appropriate. The search for innovative methods and technologies to facilitate the achievement of these targets and benchmarks should be promoted.

v) Firm and reliable commitments on domestic and international financing will be essential, and should have a strong focus on the most deprived children and communities wherever they are, but particularly in poorer countries. While emphasizing that strong domestic financing is the key to success, we also urge wider development partners to increase their aid to education. Additionally, South-South Cooperation and investment will be an important mechanism of education financing. *[Drafting Group]*

Paragraph 12

'Technical assistance' should be a key feature of the post-2015 education agenda to ensure that important and crucial documents, data and reports are submitted on time. Coaching or working in partnership under suitable arrangements, such as South-South cooperation, is ideal and highly recommended. *[The Pacific]*

The five EFA co-convening agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, World Bank) should be identified by name, and there should be descriptions of their past contributions to Jomtien and Dakar to emphasize their accountability for the post-2015 education agenda. Other major IGOs, such as UN Women, OECD, WHO, etc. and regional GOs such as EU, ISESCO, etc. and also regional development banks should also be invited for contribution. *[Republic of Korea]*

Annex II

Conference Structure

APREC was the first in a series of regional education conferences taking place across the world prior to the World Education Forum, May 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea.

APREC involved ministers of education and high-level ministry officials from 37 countries across the Asia-Pacific region, all Members and Associate Member States of UNESCO. In addition, APREC brought together 10 UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations, 43 civil society organizations, businesses, national institutes and centres, and individual experts. Approximately 300 participants attended this conference, and helped shape the discussion and deliberations on the future of education post-2015.

The Conference was divided into two segments (see the 'Programme at a glance' below). Directors and high-level officials of ministries of education attended the Regional Dialogue on EFA and Beyond (6–7 August 2014). Ministers of education (or their representatives) attended the Ministerial Forum on Education Beyond 2015 (7 August 2014 evening and 8 August 2014). All the participants jointly adopted the outcome document of the Conference, the Asia-Pacific Regional Statement on Education Beyond 2015 (Bangkok Statement).

Programme at a glance

REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON EDUCATION FOR ALL AND BEYOND			
Day 1 – 6 August 2014 (Wednesday)			
MORNING	**08:00–09:00**	Registration	
	09:00–09:40 Ballroom I & II	**OPENING SESSION** Welcome Greetings Opening speech Introduction to the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference Adoption of the agenda	
	09:40–10:25 Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY I** Presentation of the draft regional EFA review synthesis report Introduction to the subregional group discussions	
	10:25–10:40	Coffee break	
	10:40–12:00 Riverside III Riverside VI & VII Pompadour Riverside IV	**PARALLEL SESSIONS I** Subregional group discussions: Key lessons learnt from the Education for All (EFA) experience and remaining challenges Central and East Asia Southeast Asia South and West Asia The Pacific	
	12:00–13:30	Lunch	

Programme at a glance

Day 1 – 6 August 2014 (Wednesday)		
AFTERNOON	**13:30–14:10** Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY II** Presentation on the development of the post-2015 education agenda Introduction to the thematic discussions
	14:10–17:10	**PARALLEL SESSIONS II** Thematic discussions: Regional perspectives on the post-2015 education agenda
AFTERNOON	Pompadour Ballroom I & II Riverside III Riverside VI & VII Riverside IV	Basic education for all children Skills and competencies Education for global citizenship and sustainable development Teachers for the future we want Governance and financing
	17:10–17:50 Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY III** Reports from the thematic discussions
	17:50–18:00 Ballroom I & II	Wrap up of Day 1
EVENING	**19:30** Ballroom I & II	Reception dinner

Day 2 – 7 August 2014 (Thursday)		
MORNING	**09:00–10:15** Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY IV** Regional perspectives on the post-2015 education framework for action
	10:15-10:30	Coffee break
	10:30–12:00 Riverside III Riverside VI & VII Pompadour Riverside IV	**PARALLEL SESSIONS III** Subregional group discussions: Regional perspectives on the post-2015 education framework for action Central and East Asia Southeast Asia South and West Asia The Pacific
	12:00–13:30	Lunch
AFTERNOON	**13:30–14:30** Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY V** Reports from subregional group discussions
	14:30–14:45	Coffee break
	14:45–16:15 Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY VI** Debate on the substantive elements of the draft outcome document
	16:15–16:30 Ballroom I & II	Wrap up of the Regional Dialogue on EFA and Beyond

MINISTERIAL FORUM ON EDUCATION BEYOND 2015			
Day 2 – 7 August 2014 (Thursday)			
EVENING	**18:30–19:00** Ballroom I, II & III	**OPENING CEREMONY** Welcome Speeches Photo session	
	19:00 Ballroom I, II & III	Dinner	

Day 3 – 8 August 2014 (Friday)			
MORNING	**09:00–10:00** Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY VII** Reports from the Regional Dialogue on EFA and Beyond	
	10:00–10:15	Coffee break	
	10:15–12:00 Ballroom I & II	**MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE** Key issues and future prospects for education beyond 2015	
	12:00–13:30	Lunch	
AFTERNOON	**13:30–14:30** Ballroom I & II	**PLENARY VIII** Presentation and adoption of the outcome document	
	14:30–15:00 Ballroom I & II	**CLOSING SESSION** Way forward Closing remarks	

Parallel Sessions I: Subregional Group Discussions – Key Lessons Learned from the Education for All (EFA) Experience and Remaining Challenges

Participants for this session included government officials and representatives of CSOs, UN agencies and academia, divided into four subregional groups (Central and East Asia, Southeast Asia, South and West Asia, and the Pacific) based on their geographical designation.

The objectives of this session involved:

- Review of subregional achievements and lessons learned in EFA;
- Identification of remaining gaps, issues and priority areas for education development in countries of the subregions.

Facilitators were assigned to each subregional group, while designated UNESCO and UIS representatives helped capture the status of EFA in their respective subregion. Group discussion centred around six key questions:

1. What are the outstanding EFA achievements in countries of your subregion?
2. What are the successful interventions and promising practices in EFA and enabling factors that can be scaled up and/or replicated?

3. What were the constraining factors and/or major bottlenecks during the implementation that hindered progress towards achieving the EFA goals?

4. What are the key areas of EFA focus and how would you take these forward as we move beyond 2015?

5. What can be done to systematically share EFA experiences within the subregion and with other subregions in the framework of South-South Cooperation?

To help facilitate discussion, a draft Regional EFA Synthesis Report was provided to all participants prior to the conference as background material to the discussion. Based on the group discussions, elected rapporteurs presented short summaries of findings during the Plenary II session.

Parallel Sessions II: Thematic Discussions – Regional Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Agenda

During Day One five thematic discussions were organized: i) Basic Education for All Children, ii) Skills and Competencies, iii) Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development, iv) Teachers for the Future We Want, and; v) Governance and Financing. Participants were grouped according to their respective areas of specialization. Each session generally focused on reviewing trends, issues and challenges with regard to the thematic area and providing recommendations and proposed strategies for education post-2015.

Each sesion selected a rapporteur to deliver a summary of the group discussion at the Plenary III session.

Plenary and Parallel Sessions: Regional Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Framework for Action

During Day Two, plenary and parallel sessions on the post-2015 education framework for action were organized. The plenary provided an overall presentation on the concept and requirements in relation to the future framework for action, followed by a panel discussion on the current thinking around global and regional governance, as well as means of implementation at the country, subregional and regional levels. The objectives of the session were to:

- Formulate regional recommendations on the global strategies and mechanisms to support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda;

- Identify existing and/or future regional and/or subregional initiatives and strategies that are important for supporting the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda at the country level.

Both plenary and subregional sessions were assigned facilitators to lead and moderate the discussions. The subregional discussions were broken into four groups: Central and East Asia, Southeast Asia, South and West Asia, and the Pacific. Key questions addressed during the subregional sessions included:

1. What global strategies, measures and mechanisms will be important to support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda, in terms of coordination, partnership, financing, advocacy, accountability and monitoring?

2. What existing organizations, structures and/or mechanisms can be further strengthened to advance and support the future education agenda at global, regional and subregional levels?

3. In light of the emerging priorities for education development and cooperation, what means of implementation (e.g. evidence-based policy, capacity development, coordination, multi-stakeholder partnerships, financing, accountability, monitoring) should be more emphasized at country, subregional and regional levels, and how?

Facilitators of the subregional discussions provided a brief introduction while rapporteurs were appointed to deliver summaries of discussions at the subsequent Plenary V session.

Ministerial Roundtable: Key Issues and Future Prospects for Education Beyond 2015

During Day Three, ministers of education (or their representatives) attended the Ministerial Forum on Education Beyond 2015. This session was designed to allow Education Ministers to exchange views on key challenges and priorities for education post-2015, highlighting, in particular, issues of learning, quality, equity/gender equality and governance. Three key questions were addressed:

1. What are the critical challenges to be addressed in your country towards 2030?
2. How would you prepare your country to address these challenges?
3. How would you see your country's implementation of post-2015 education?

The key considerations, as presented by ministers or their representatives, led into Plenary VIII, the Presentation and Adoption of the Asia-Pacific Statement on Education Beyond 2015.

Annex III

Speeches

Suthasri Wongsamarn

Permanent Secretary for Education and Acting Minister of Education, Thailand

It is a great pleasure for me to have this opportunity to welcome you all today to Bangkok. On behalf of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO and the Thai Ministry of Education, I would like to extend our warmest greetings to all the distinguished delegates and speakers to this very important Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference.

In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All was endorsed in Jomtien, Thailand. Since then, all UNESCO Member States have made great efforts to fulfil the educational commitments as contained therein. Therefore, the year 2015, which will mark the 25th anniversary of the Declaration, will be an opportune time to think back and, more importantly, to think ahead. It is in this spirit that the World Education Forum 2015 will be held next year at Incheon, in the Republic of Korea.

Preceding the World Education Forum, this Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference is being held as the forerunner of other regional conferences. In this Conference, we will have a Regional Dialogue on EFA and Beyond for the first two days, followed by a Ministerial Forum on Education Beyond 2015, which will be opened tomorrow. With the cooperation of distinguished representatives gathering here, I am convinced that we will be able to come up with innovative ideas and policy recommendations to feed into the 2015 World Education Forum at Incheon in the Republic of Korea.

Apart from the many thought-provoking presentations and the insightful discussions that will take place during this Conference, we will also have an important opportunity to network across the agencies represented at this Conference. This will help pave the way for national, regional and global collaboration across all sectors to improve the quality and relevance of education beyond 2015.

I also hope that this Conference will further strengthen the spirit of community in the Asia-Pacific Region. Together, we can make a difference for the people of this region and nurture them as global citizens. Together, we can create partnerships that can not only serve our mutual benefits and common interests, but also make contributions to educational development in the global arena.

On behalf of the Thai Ministry of Education and the Thai National Commission for UNESCO, I would like to thank UNESCO for choosing Thailand as the venue for this important Conference. Also, I would like to thank all of you for attending this meeting. I wish you all a pleasant stay in Thailand and every success in your deliberations.

Yoshiaki Sato

Director for Overseas Cooperation, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan

I would first like to express my sincere gratitude to UNESCO Bangkok Director Gwang-Jo Kim and his staff, and to Ministry of Education of Thailand Acting Minister of Education Suthasri Wongsamarn and the officials there for their unstinting efforts in organizing this conference.

The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All, was adopted at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, and it heads into its concluding year in 2015. We acknowledge that UNESCO, as the lead agency, will play a vital role for education beyond 2015. UNESCO has taken the lead in reviewing the achievement of EFA goals and developing the post-2015 educational agenda in collaboration with Member States, education- and development-related international organizations, NGOs, experts, and others. One of UNESCO's most recent and outstanding contributions is facilitating the proposal of a new draft agenda for education included in the Muscat Agreement, which was issued at the Global EFA Meeting in Oman in May this year, as well as the EFA Steering Committee's Joint Proposal. We in Japan very much appreciate the leading role UNESCO has played up to now. We also have high expectations for UNESCO's efforts to lead in making coherence of the educational goals and targets, and those of the post-2015 development agenda.

As made clear in the Overarching Goal, what needs to be firmly positioned in the post-2015 educational agenda and the post-2015 development agenda is ensuring the quality of education. For this, at this conference we hope the delegates will share their experiences from various perspectives and engage in positive discussion regarding their thinking on the quality of education in the Asia-Pacific region and how to ensure it, and their recognition of learning outcomes. We also expect to consider a draft of the framework for action that will lead to improving and ensuring the quality of education. The recommendation of the framework for action will then be presented as the proposal from the Asia-Pacific region to the World Education Forum to be held in Incheon in the Republic of Korea in May next year.

The role played by Education for Sustainable Development is vital for improving and ensuring the quality of education. ESD is incorporated in the Muscat Agreement and the Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals in July this year. I believe ESD is a paramount concept for setting the direction of education in the future. This year is the final year of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which was initiated through a proposal by Japan. In November, Japan will co-organize the UNESCO World Conference on ESD with UNESCO. At this conference, the delegates will review the DESD, and discuss measures for advancing ESD after 2015. I am greatly looking forward to having the opportunity to hold discussions with you all in Japan in November on these efforts for ESD, while we also consider the direction of education in the years beyond 2015.

Last but not least, I would like to thank again UNESCO Bangkok and the Ministry of Education of Thailand, as well as to pay my highest respects to Mr. Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO, for his excellent leadership. I sincerely hope that through the efforts of the governments of the Asia-Pacific nations, this conference, which is the first of the regional conferences, will produce very fruitful outcomes and serve as a model for the upcoming conferences in other regions.

This conference is being supported by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Promotion of Education in Asia and the Pacific Region. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is very expectant about the outcomes of the conference, and Japan wishes to contribute as much as possible to its success.

Gwang-Jo Kim

Director, UNESCO Bangkok – Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

Good morning and welcome to the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference, the first regional meeting in preparation for the World Education Forum. Let us remind ourselves that Education for All began in our region, and will conclude in our region, Asia-Pacific. Thus, convening this conference is an imperative.

Unlike previous meetings and conferences, this Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference will set the stage for education beyond 2015. Over the next three days, ministers, high-level officials of ministries of education, experts and representatives of CSOs, development partners and academia will discuss issues, challenges and priorities for education beyond 2015. We will refer to the national EFA reviews, a historic exercise completed recently in which the entire region participated to review EFA progress and analyse enabling and constraining factors. And collectively, we, the Asia-Pacific region, will reflect on the Muscat Agreement that has defined global targets for education and develop regional recommendations for the international framework for action, to be adopted at the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea in 2015.

As we conclude EFA and prepare for our new journey in education, now is the time for the region to speak out and have our voice included in the global education agenda beyond 2015. We recognize of course, that the EFA agenda and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are unlikely to be achieved by 2015, and acknowledge the continued relevance of the EFA agenda. We must ensure that what we have yet to achieve today, must be brought forth tomorrow with even more commitment and cooperation. Our role in influencing this new education agenda is critical. And our collective efforts will be well-featured.

Education is no longer a national agenda, but rather, a transnational agenda. Education is our collective responsibility. As reaffirmed in the Muscat Agreement, education is a fundamental human right for every person. Education is an essential condition for human fulfilment, peace, sustainable development, economic growth, decent work, gender equality and responsible global citizenship. Education contributes to the reduction of inequalities and the eradication of poverty, thereby establishing the right conditions that give rise to just, inclusive and sustainable societies. And therefore, education must be placed at the heart of the global development agenda and, of course, at the heart of national development. In quoting the Muscat Agreement, the post-2015 education agenda should be clearly defined, aspirational, transformative, balanced and holistic, and an integral part of the broader international development framework. It should be a universal agenda.

During these three days, let us reflect on our past EFA achievements, lessons learned and remaining challenges, and let us focus on the seven targets proposed by the Muscat Agreement, taking into account the sustainable development goals as proposed by the Open Working Group. I encourage you to work towards a rights-based and flexible post-2015 education agenda that accommodates diversity in governance structures; that reflects a perspective based on equity and inclusion; that takes into account the expansion of basic education; that integrates lifelong learning approaches; that ensures gender equality; and that addresses the need to overcome all forms of discrimination in and through education.

The Asia-Pacific stretches across a vast geographical area, is rich with history, and diverse in cultures where 3,500 languages are spoken. About 4.3 billion people around the world call Asia-Pacific home. This is more than half of the world's population. But, in our rapidly changing world, technological advances have brought us closer. We are more connected than ever. In this vein, let us continue to promote sustainable development and active and effective global and local citizenship, contribute to strengthening democracy and peace, and foster respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. In one of the most diverse and dynamic regions, education is very critical to our development. That is why we gather here today.

Now, let me turn to the structure and process of the conference. As you may know, the conference will be conducted in two segments. The first segment is the Regional Dialogue on EFA and Beyond (6–7 August 2014). During this segment, high-level officials of ministries of education and representatives of CSOs and development partners will review EFA progress and discuss issues, challenges and priorities for education post-2015, which will feed into the draft outcome document to be adopted by ministers on 8 August 2014. The second segment is the Ministerial Forum on Education Beyond 2015 (7 August 2014 evening and 8 August 2014). There will be a ministerial roundtable discussion, and the presentation and adoption of the outcome document of the Conference. Through these discussions and debates, I hope we will be able to convert the targets into concrete actions.

The process to determine post-2015 education goals, targets and strategies will culminate at the World Education Forum 2015, in Incheon, Republic of Korea. An international framework for action for education 2015–2030 will be adopted. And finally, the post-2015 sustainable development goals will be adopted at the UN Summit to be held in New York in September 2015.

Once again, welcome to the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference. I look forward to our fruitful discussions and debates, and to working with you over the next three days as we prepare for the education of our future.

Isiye Ndombi

UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific

It's a real pleasure and honour to be with you today and to have this opportunity to make a brief speech on behalf of the UNICEF Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific, and on behalf of the other two Regional Offices that cover Asia.

First of all, many thanks to the Royal Thai Government for hosting this landmark meeting, and for their enduring leadership in prioritizing investments in education. And thanks for all of you in attendance who continue to contribute to the body of knowledge that will enable the world community to accelerate education development.

Knowing that investment in education is foundational to human and social development, UNICEF has been working closely with your governments in our common pursuit of the MDGs and EFA goals over the years. We have seen tremendous progress, with many countries on track for both sets of goals. We are also very mindful that the job remains unfinished in many countries and within countries where children still lack access to education, and many fail to complete education with meaningful learning outcomes.

The challenge before us is, therefore, twofold: firstly, to help countries which still lag behind to catch up on the goals that they are currently committed to and accelerate progress where needed; and, secondly, to work with our key partners, like UNESCO, other multilaterals and bilaterals, and civil society to set and address the new post-2015 agenda. In that sense, this meeting is crucial and timely.

Going forward I wish to highlight four things: one, the critical importance of focusing on learning outcomes – not just numeracy and literacy – but underlining the emphasis on lifelong learning and global citizenship; two, UNICEF welcomes the broader education agenda centred around one set of targets agreed in various fora, including Muscat; three, that we need to entrench the foundational focus on early childhood education; and finally, that we need to address the major bottlenecks that keep children and youth from schools (including poverty, remoteness, disability, gender, ethnic minority issues and conflict and disasters).

As we think forward on our collective commitments for the next decade, you can be assured of UNICEF's continued support to the education agenda in Asia and the Pacific.

Young-Gon Kim

Secretary-General, World Education Forum 2015 Host Committee Secretariat, Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea

On behalf of the Republic of Korea, I would like to express special thanks to Director Gwang-Jo Kim and all the staff members of the UNESCO Bangkok Office for the excellent preparation for this important event. Today's conference is very meaningful and timely, as it is the first of its kind and its results are expected to be observed by other regions with great interest. We have sailed a long way since the 2000 Dakar meeting. While we have made some progress in the EFA goals, we should admit that there are numerous issues yet to be resolved. Many children are far from receiving quality education, and disparities among social groups still remain significant. Thus, we must adjust our efforts collectively and accordingly, utilizing lessons and experiences learned to date. The importance of global values such as peace and happiness, responsible citizenship, and sustainable development should be further emphasized. Innovative thinking and technologies should be adopted by learners and educators alike to open new platforms and opportunities.

All these issues will be discussed at the World Education Forum 2015 to be held in Incheon, Korea, to form the post-2015 education agenda. The Republic of Korea is well aware of the important roles of education sector to enhance the well-being of the global community, and therefore the significance of the Forum. I sincerely hope for the success of APREC so that its results will form the heart of the discussions at the Forum. On behalf of the Republic of Korea, I welcome you all to the World Education Forum 2015.

Qian Tang

Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

It is my great pleasure to address you here today in Thailand at this important event, which is the first of a series of regional conferences that will prepare the World Education Forum 2015, hosted by the Republic of Korea in Incheon, from 19 to 22 May 2015.

I would like to thank our generous host, the Ministry of Education of Thailand, for having made such excellent arrangements and receiving us in their beautiful country to hold the Asia and Pacific Regional Education Conference 2014.

I would also like to thank both Japan and the Republic of Korea for their generous contributions which have made this conference possible and their continued support to education and EFA in the past years in this region for which we are very grateful.

I would like to mention the very close and fruitful collaboration with UNICEF and civil society partners such as Education International and the Global Campaign for Education and their continuous support throughout the process globally, and in this region, for which we are grateful.

Let me begin by stating once again the purpose of this Conference, which is three-fold: Firstly, to review progress made in EFA in the region over the past 15 years; second, to reflect on the proposed post-2015 education agenda in the context of national and regional priorities and challenges, and provide comments and feedback, and third, to identify implementation requirements of the future education agenda.

In developing the education agenda for the future, we must identify and analyse what has been accomplished over the past 15 years and what gaps remain, including lessons learned. We must also take into consideration emerging issues that impact on education and challenges, and identify priorities for the future. This region has a lot to share in this respect.

Secondly, this Conference will discuss and review the proposed post-2015 global education goal and targets from the regional perspective in terms of education priorities and requirements.

Thirdly, the Conference must reflect on and debate implementation requirements for the future education agenda, taking into account each country's specific context.

What is the purpose of a global education agenda?

While each country has its own education development strategy and a mid- and long-term plan, the purpose of a global education agenda is to define global, aspirational and transformative targets of universal relevance, and that propose a level of ambition with global indicators that can be measured and compared across countries and over time. The global education agenda is meant to drive development globally and nationally, and to inspire action in areas which are considered key for education. Therefore, it is crucial that all countries participate in the process of the development of this global agenda in order to ensure that it contributes to the realization of their own vision and ambitions for education. Of key importance is that the future education agenda be flexible, and that it reflects national priorities and contexts. Countries should thus link their national education strategy with the future global agenda, while setting country-specific targets and indicators. In other words, countries themselves are in the driver's seat as concerns their development.

What have we done so far at global level? In order to facilitate this process, the UN has launched a multi-layered and highly consultative process to develop a post-2015 development agenda.

As part of this process, UNESCO, in close collaboration with UNICEF, facilitated the debate on the post-2015 education agenda. In May of this year, the Global EFA Meeting 2014 was organized in Muscat, Oman and hosted by the Sultanate of Oman. Forty-two Member States participated in the meeting, representing all geographic regions of the world, as well as civil society, UN and regional organizations, and other key education stakeholders. The meeting adopted a Final Statement, known as the Muscat Agreement, which represents the current vision of key education stakeholders representing the education community on the post 2015 education agenda. It contains a proposed overarching goal for education and seven targets.

At the same time, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goal, consisting of thirty Member States, and which was established by the UN General Assembly as a follow-up to Rio+20, developed a Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals that contains seventeen goals, one of which is on education. The Muscat Agreement significantly impacted the discussions of the Open Working Group in New York on the education goals and targets within the broader post-2015 development agenda.

Both of these proposals represent important milestones in our work towards developing a post-2015 education agenda. However, more reflection and debate are required – and every country needs to take part in it – to further refine the proposed goal and targets in order to reach our common goal: an education agenda that is relevant to all countries, and which is aspirational and transformative, with feasible and measurable targets.

What are the next steps towards the development of the post-2015 education agenda? As I briefed the meeting yesterday, the UN Secretary-General will issue a synthesis report on post-2015 in autumn 2014 based on the OWG proposal. This will be followed by intergovernmental negotiations until September 2015 which will further debate the seventeen Goals and targets of the OWG. It is essential for Member States to participate in this process. UNESCO and its partners will continue to provide advice and assistance to facilitate your participation in this process. UNESCO will also continue to facilitate the debate and consultations between Member States and other education stakeholders, and develop a Framework for Action for the implementation of the agenda at the global, regional and country level.

A main challenge for the coming months is to ensure that the outcome of the WEF 2015 and the education goals and targets of the global development agenda to be adopted at the UN Summit in New York City in September 2015 are fully aligned.

As mentioned earlier, Member States are in the drivers' seat for the development of the post-2015 education agenda. Therefore, continued strong engagement and support of all Member States throughout the process is required, and, in particular, communication between the ministry of education and the ministry of foreign affairs, which will discuss the future agenda at UN level.

Over the past two days, there have been rich discussions, whose outcomes will certainly contribute to the further development of the future education agenda.

I am very much looking forward to hearing your views, in particular during the ministerial roundtable on the future education agenda, based on your requirements and priorities.

Annex IV

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