



# Sub-regional Conference on EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Agendas in SAARC Countries

**13-14 October 2015**  
**Conference Report**



**New Delhi Office**  
Cluster Office for Bangladesh,  
Bhutan, India, Maldives,  
Nepal and Sri Lanka

**SUB-REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
EFA UNFINISHED AND POST 2015 AGENDAS IN SAARC COUNTRIES**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABL	Activity-Based Learning
AEPAM	Academy of Educational Planning and Management
AMICS	Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANER	adjusted net enrolment ratio
APMED	Asia Pacific Meeting on Education
APPEAL	Asia Pacific Programme for Education and Adult Literacy
ARNEC	Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education
ATD	All Together in Dignity to Overcome Poverty
AU	African Union
BECS	Basic Education Community Schools Programme
CBE	Community-Based Education
CEAIE	China Education Association for International Exchange
CFS/CFE	child-friendly schools/child-friendly education
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DIR/BKK	Director/Bangkok
DIR/NDL	Director/New Delhi
DPI	Department of Public Instruction
DPs	development partners
DWT	Decent Work Technical Support Team
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECD/ECE	Early Childhood Development/Early Childhood Education
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECR	extended classrooms
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
E-GMR	EFA Global Monitoring Report
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPR	Education Policy and Reform Unit
ETAG	Education Technology Action Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEdMM	Forum Education Ministers' Meeting
FFA	Framework for Action
GCE	Global Campaign for Education

GE	general education
GEM	Global EFA Meeting
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GOI	Government of India
HIV-AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IAEG	Inter-Agency and Expert Group
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICDE	International Council for Distance and Open Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INGOs	International Non-Government Organization
IWR	Inclusive Wealth Report
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LDCs	least developed countries
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG/MDGs	Millennium Development Goal/ Millennium Development Goals
MGIEP	Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education and Peace
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MLE-WG	Multilingual Education Working Group
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEs	Ministers of Education
MOOC	massive open online course
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDL	New Delhi
NEA	National Education Account
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NFE	non-formal education
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NUEPA	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OER	open educational resources
OOSC	out-of-school children
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
PP	pre-primary
PTR	parent-teacher Ratio

PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
Q/A	question/answer
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia
SA	South Asia
SAF	South Asian Regional Framework
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDG/SDGs	Sustainable Development Goal/Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEAMEO	Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization
SLC	Secondary Level Certificate
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWAPs	Sector-wide approaches
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TLL	Transformative Learning Labs
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Thematic Working Group
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade
UNPD	United Nations Procurement Division
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Education Forum
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

## OUTCOME DOCUMENT

### New Delhi Agreement for Enhancing SAARC Collaboration for Education 2030

Adopted by the participants of the Sub-Regional Conference on  
“EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Education Agendas in SAARC  
Countries”

13 -14 October 2015  
New Delhi, India

## CONTEXT

The “EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Education Agendas in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Countries”, Sub-regional Conference held in New Delhi from 13 to 14 October 2015:

Recognizing the New Delhi Declaration of the “Second SAARC Education Ministers Meeting” (New Delhi, 31 October 2014) that agreed to expand the scope of cooperation which would involve “formulation of the SAARC Framework for Action for the post-2015 Education Agenda”;

Recalling the central role of education in ensuring, “inclusive and sustainable development, accelerating social transformation and promoting peace, tolerance and social cohesion”, as affirmed at the Incheon Declaration, “Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All”;

Taking inspiration from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development on 25th September 2015 in particular the SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”;

Understanding education as a building block and essential condition to the achievement of all the SDGs;

Affirming that remarkable progress towards EFA goals has been achieved since 2000 in South Asia, particularly in terms of universalizing primary education, reducing gender disparities in primary education, and improving access to secondary and tertiary education;

Confirming, however, that in South Asia the EFA agenda remained unfinished in a majority of countries,

particularly those goals relating to youth and adult illiterates, out-of-school children of primary and lower secondary school ages, low access to early childhood care and education, inadequate opportunities for skills development and poor quality of education and student learning outcomes;

Considering that the South Asian region is home to 51 percent of the world’s illiterate adult population and to 17.3 percent of primary and 40.4 percent of lower secondary level school going age out-of-school children of the world<sup>1</sup>;

Reaffirming the challenges faced by SAARC countries which call for innovative, targeted and sustained collaborative efforts to foster education development in the South Asian region.

## COMMITMENTS

Accordingly, we, the participants, agreed in enhancing regional collaboration for education 2030 by:

1. Building on the past education gains and achievements in ensuring inclusive and equitable quality learning and education for all - children, youth and adults - at all levels of education, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to tertiary education and beyond with gender equality;
2. Identifying critical bottlenecks to meet SDG 4, including the EFA unfinished business in particular the persistent challenges of illiteracy and out-of-school children; this includes setting earlier

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UNICEF. Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. Montreal: UIS, 2015, 145 p



targets for EFA unfinished business;

3. Interpreting, contextualizing and prioritizing the SDG 4 indicators and developing and sharing national strategies to achieve SDG 4 in the SAARC Member States; Adapting SDG 4 to the South Asia context including formulating intermediate targets earlier than 2030, taking into account the country contexts;
4. Ensuring that both girls and boys, especially from marginalized groups complete their education with expected learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) defined for respective levels of education;
5. Promoting lifelong learning through better integrating formal, non-formal and informal education and addressing emerging challenges such as the need to improve the development of skills for life and for work and to foster global citizenship for all learners in all age groups;
6. Adopting convergent and cross-sectoral approaches, considering how child labour, child marriage as well as stunting and poor sanitation, among others, impact on learning and recognizing the critical role education has on improving human development outcomes;
7. Developing a national/regional monitoring and evaluation mechanism and measuring the progress in achieving SDG 4 with final set of indicators to be adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2016 and generate and use the evidence for better policy formulation and management of education systems and sharing it with other SAARC countries;
8. Endeavouring to achieve a minimum 4-6 percent of GDP and/or at least 15-20 percent of total public expenditure for the entire education sector, including ECCE to achieve SDG 4 targets with a prioritization for the EFA unfinished agenda through improved governance and efficient and effective spending; Advocating for greater international technical and financial support to complement country-led efforts;
9. Institutionalizing responsive, inclusive and accountable educational systems at the national, sub-national and local levels through strong sector planning, adopting sector wide approach, evidence-based planning, governance and

management which meet the demands of the population;

10. Reflecting on the establishment/designation of a regional cooperation mechanism and thematic regional entities in each SAARC country for SAARC Education 2030 Framework for Action in line with the SDGs and sub-regional priorities on education inspired by such successful cases as the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO);
11. Recommending on the establishment of a SAARC Education Ministers Organization similar to SEAMEO.

## The Way Forward

To pursue the above commitments, we agree on the following priority actions for cooperation among the SAARC countries:

1. Develop a SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030 within the broader scope of the Framework for Action (FFA) - Education 2030, including possible adoption of specific prioritized targets earlier than 2030 in line with the SDGs and taking into account national and regional priorities on education, the 2nd SAARC Education Ministers New Delhi Declaration, the outcomes of this conference and existing SAARC mechanisms<sup>2</sup>.
2. Pursue a regional mechanism for advancing education in South Asia such as “SEAMEO”, “SEAMEO Secretariat” and “SEAMEO Centres” and establish linkage between SEAMEO centers and SAARC centers;
3. Enhance technical cooperation and exchange of experts for capacity building, promoting innovative approaches, sharing evidence and research findings for developing appropriate strategies for attaining the SDG 4;
4. Establish a regional mechanism, including an online portal to share/disseminate information/knowledge, including research results, best practices and innovations, relating to education policies and programmes, among countries to facilitate cross-country learning and the

<sup>2</sup> Possible SAARC mechanisms that can be tapped include the South Asian University, the SAARC Human Development Center, other SAARC Centers established under SAARC agreements and the South Asian Centre for Teacher Development.

- formulation of evidence-based policy options and programmatic initiatives, and also expand communications and public information on the progress among SAARC countries to advance South Asian-regional cooperation in achieving SDG 4.
5. Develop a strong regional monitoring mechanism, including periodic collaborative review to monitor the progress towards SDG 4 and South Asian comparable learning assessment results. Develop comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation systems in order to generate sound evidence for policy formulation and the management of education systems as well as to ensure accountability. We commit to improve the quality, levels of disaggregation and timeliness of reporting, including to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics;
  6. Enhance collaboration among countries and with UNESCO and UNICEF in their respective areas of expertise and maintain respective MOU and Agreement with SAARC secretariat. Engage with the other co-conveners of the 2015 World Education Forum: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNHCR and the World Bank Group; as well as other UN agencies e.g. ILO, WHO, WFP; multilateral and bilateral organizations, the Global Partnership for Education, INGOs, CSOs, academia and the private sector at the South Asia regional level and with national Education Donor Working Groups/ Local Education Working Groups and regional coordination mechanism to support the achievement of SDG 4;
  7. Report the progress of above actions in the next SAARC Education Technical Meeting to be hosted by India;
  8. Launch the SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030 and a regional mechanism for advancing education in the next SAARC Education Ministers' Meeting to be hosted by the Maldives.



## Inaugural Session

<b>Chair</b>	Dr Subash Chandra Khuntia Secretary, School Education and Literacy MHRD, Government of India
<b>Welcome Address</b>	Mr Shigeru Aoyagi Director and UNESCO Representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka UNESCO New Delhi Office
<b>Welcome Address</b>	Ms Urmila Sarkar Regional Advisor - Education UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)
<b>Inaugural Address</b>	Mr Yuri Afanasiev UN Resident Coordinator, UN System, India
<b>Inaugural Address</b>	Mr Gwang-Jo Kim Director UNESCO Bangkok Office



**Dr Subash Chandra Khuntia** greeted all the Guests with a warm welcome to India and to the Sub-regional Conference on EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Agendas in SAARC Countries.

He emphasized that this Conference is a unique effort to bring together the countries of the same geographic region to find ways on how to move ahead with the unfinished agenda of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and on how to strategize towards achieving all the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4.

As Chair of the session, Mr Khuntia introduced and invited each of the Speakers to address the gathering.

**Mr Shigeru Aoyagi** extended his warm welcome to all the Delegates from SAARC countries. He also extended his welcome to the Representatives of UNICEF, Representatives of various UN agencies - ILO, UNDP, UN Women, Representative of the World Bank, Director of SEAMEO, Representatives of UNESCO from SAARC countries and the Bangkok Office, and all the participants to the Conference. He acknowledged and thanked everyone for supporting UNESCO with the implementation of the Education for All (EFA) Agenda<sup>3</sup>, which is ongoing until end of this year.

While noting that the Conference was originally scheduled to be held in July, 2015, but was

postponed, Mr Aoyagi underscored the timeliness of this Conference, right after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York on September 25-27, 2015. A set of 17 “global goals” was adopted to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda.

Mr Aoyagi said that the Conference would reflect on SDG 4 in all the discussions, and look at how SDG 4 can be implemented in an inclusive, holistic manner. He informed participants that the result of this Conference would be crucial for two very important upcoming events: firstly, the special high-level meeting in early November 2015 to adopt and launch the “Framework for Action (FFA), Education 2030”, alongside the 38th UNESCO General Conference; and secondly the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education in late November 2015 organized by the UNESCO Bangkok office to discuss the priorities on the education goal at regional and sub-regional levels. The result of this meeting will be helpful for the Bangkok meeting to complete the SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030.

For this Conference, technical presentations from different perspectives and experiences from different countries and organizations would be provided in order for participants to develop insights into programme interventions. An Outcome Document consolidating all the presentations, discussions, reflections and common understanding from this Conference would be agreed on at the end of the 2 days, to be called the New Delhi Agreement for SAARC Collaboration for Education 2030.

The New Delhi Agreement for SAARC Collaboration for Education 2030 will be an important document, which will guide the region like a compass to work for Education 2030. Based on this document, the SAARC Educational Technical Meeting, which will be hosted by India, will be informed of the priorities for action on education in the region.

Mr Aoyagi proposed a Drafting Committee for the Outcome Document and proposed the name of Ms Rina Ray, Additional Secretary, Department of Secondary Education, MHRD, Government of India, to be the Chair of the Drafting Committee. He invited a representative from each of the SAARC countries to be a member of the Drafting Committee. He also proposed the name of Mr Shailendra Sidgel, Regional Statistical Advisor, UIS, to be a member of the Drafting Committee. UNICEF



and UNESCO would collaborate with the Drafting Committee to facilitate and support the process.

Mr Aoyagi invited the participating countries to organize a follow-up activity at the country-level on the Framework for Action, Education 2030 and was pleased to announce support on this from UNESCO through a small grant.



**Ms Urmila Sarkar** conveyed her warm welcome and ‘Namaste’ to the officials from the South Asian countries, UNESCO colleagues, and all the participants.

She shared that when UNESCO New Delhi first discussed this meeting, she did not hesitate to commit the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia’s support given the significance of the discussion and its implications for the education of the region’s children.

While referring to the recent adoption of SDGs in New York, Ms Sarkar posed key questions for the Conference to reflect upon in the next 2 days:

*What do the SDGs, and in particular Goal 4 mean for South Asia?*

*How are we going to build on the achievements of the quarter of a century work on Education for All from 1990 to 2015 to achieve SDG 4?*

*What about the unmet EFA goals?*

*Can the countries in South Asia achieve the targets earlier than 2030?*

*Can we have South Asia education targets linked to SDG 4 which are reflective of national-specific goals?*

*What could be the role of strategic partnerships such as*

*the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) or the Global Partnership for Education?*

*Above all, how can we ensure that no child is excluded from going to school and from learning?*

While noting the many challenges in the midst of South Asia’s diversity, she also acknowledged many opportunities. She highlighted two issues beyond education that have impact on achieving SDG 4, namely: 1) conflict and disasters, and 2) the changing demographic and economic landscape in South Asia. Given the challenges that conflicts and disasters bring, preparedness and resilience must be facilitated by strengthening contingency planning and integrating Disaster Risk Reduction in education. Likewise, promoting social cohesion and peace-building through education is critical for this region.

The changing demographics and economic status of countries present a huge challenge to the educational systems in the region. More countries in the region are “graduating” to middle income status. This, combined with the trend of more private providers in education, is changing country contexts.

Moreover there are currently an estimated 269 million children of school-age (ages 4 to 14) in South Asia, a figure that is expected to rise to 280 million in 2020. “Are we ready to meet the challenge of getting all of them to go to school?” she asked.

Ms Sarkar touched upon the sex-ratio trend in the region, with more boys than girls expected in the foreseeable future. She noted that if the current trends in demographics and education continued, there would be more boys out of school in South Asia, a reverse of the present situation. “It will still be important to capitalize on the multiplier effect of girls’ education on a range of human development outcomes, while also recognizing that boys have disadvantages, too”.

Ms Sarkar highlighted statistics and issues related to out-of-school children, including children who drop out of school, and children in school but not learning. She stressed the need to strengthen efforts to address the barriers to expanding access to early childhood education, on-time enrolment, school attendance, learning and completing basic education. This cannot be done through and by education alone. Issues linked to stunting and poor sanitation and its impact on learning, child labour, child marriage, and the provision of economic incentives to address poverty

all need multi-sectoral and convergent approaches to address.

With a tall task ahead, Ms Sarkar reiterated UNICEF's commitment to work with countries and development partners to achieve SDG 4, including the unfinished EFA agenda. She emphasized the need for strategic shifts to accelerate efforts towards providing quality education for all girls and boys in South Asia, including regional mechanisms for cooperation. She underscored the transformative power of quality education and what it could do to respond to social and economic issues, especially for women and girls. Together, through this meeting, she invited the participants to shape a joint vision and framework for cooperation on how SDG 4 and other SDGs could be achieved in South Asia.



In his inaugural Address, **Mr Yuri Afanasiev** talked about the adoption of the SDGs by about 150 world leaders, including the Pope, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. It may have been just any display of power in New York, but 150 world leaders coming together for the adoption of the SDGs showed unprecedented commitment towards a world agenda for development, peace and sustainability.

Mr Afanasiev stressed that the SDGs are not only meant for the global south but for the whole world. Talking of education, he recognized that “illiteracy” is not a feature of the south alone, that (developed countries are) as much faced with this issue, that conversation around illiteracy is true around the world.

The SDGs with 17 goals and 169 targets are comprehensive and ambitious but they are not difficult to fulfill. Grouping the SDGs into three (3) sets of

agenda, Mr Afanasiev referred to SDGs 1-6, including SDG 4 on education, as the unfinished agenda of the MDGs and comprise the social agenda; SDGs 7-12 refer to economic agenda; and, SDGs 13-17 are the sustainable agenda, the goals that “ensure agenda 1 and 2 do not implode”, the biological goals that maintain the survival of the species.

He spoke of the importance of SDG 4, saying that nothing is more important than the goal of education. He acknowledged the role education played in successfully competing in the world today. He noted that people's ability to communicate and navigate the world through technology begins at school.

He underlined that the education agenda is crucial to South Asia especially given the population of children, youth and adult learners to be educated in the region. He also cited gender disparity in education in the region, which the UN System is working to eradicate. He gave the example of India on how SDG 4 is critical to the fulfillment of its aspiration to be a global superpower.

SDG 4 is critical to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. In today's world, reading and writing are not enough. Vocational and skills training are necessary, as well as infrastructure for research and development. The goal of education is measured by the success in human development and success in the achievement of peace and harmony. Put simply, education determines the success of all other development agenda. Investment in education is crucial and the 6% of the GDP that Governments have committed towards education must now be realized.

“The eyes of the world are on South Asia because mathematically and statistically without South Asia achieving SDGs, the goals of SDGs will not be achieved,” he said. It is imperative in the next 15 years for the discourse on education to be radically changed.

**Mr Gwang-Jo Kim** greeted fellow Speakers on the dais, and gave a warm welcome to officials of Governments and UN Missions present. He said he was pleased to attend the Sub Regional Conference on EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Agendas in SAARC and acknowledged UNESCO's partnership with UNICEF ROSA.

He noted that South Asia is made up of democratic societies with diverse religions, cultural practices and linguistic heritage. He acknowledged the large young population across countries in the region



and the need for socio-economic development. He highlighted the need for collaboration among the countries in order to fulfill the unfinished business of eradicating illiteracy, reducing the number of out of school children, etc. under EFA and MDGs, and in meeting the new challenges of the SDGs. With strong civil society organizations, governments should facilitate the required dynamics, without which SDGs would not be achieved. Keeping in mind, the EFA Agenda and unfinished commitments under the MDGs, interventions to deal with illiteracy should be designed. The transformative agenda for education should be built on unfinished tasks. There must be cooperation among countries, UN System, and the development community to support the achievement of SDGs, especially SDG 4 and education-related targets. There should be a multi-sectoral approach to education.

The unfinished agenda under EFA and MDGs cannot be seen as mutually exclusive with post-2015 development agenda. Education is not just a national, but an international issue; it is supported by SDG 4, but it is also part of all other SDGs. Education 2030 is a holistic model; the integration of education in a broad framework that takes into account realities on the ground is necessary.

A new Education Agenda requires new leadership. It also requires coordination within every Government to be able to develop a sustainable framework. The

success of SDG 4 requires multi-sectoral approach led by Governments with the range of stakeholders and development organizations.

In the new era, the cooperation between UNESCO and UNICEF must be further extended, and include other civil society organizations, to tackle the challenges in a cohesive way and bring in new ideas. He cited the experience of SEAMEO, which could provide South Asia with lessons and insights. He hoped that the New Delhi Agreement that would come out of this Conference would reflect this broad framework.

Mr Kim extended UNESCO's invitation to SAARC Countries for the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education in Bangkok, to be held at the end of November 2015 to share ideas on how to move forward with the post-2015 agenda, especially on matters of cooperation and partnership among countries. He ended his address with a wish for a fruitful conference.

**Mr Khuntia** reiterated what the Speakers said about the transformative nature of SDG 4 that would help in the overall achievement of the SDGs. He highlighted the essence of education, and what could be achieved in tackling poverty and socio-economic issues through education. "All can be achieved only if the people have proper education," he said.

He opined that South Asia was particularly vulnerable, but significant progress had been achieved under MDGs. He noted that SDGs went much beyond the EFA Agenda in regards to gender and primary education. He exhorted countries in South Asia to formulate policies to help achieve the targets for SDGs and "be (an) example to most of the world". He projected that between now and 2030 it would be possible to achieve the targets for these new development goals.

South Asia's demographic dividend must be used to its advantage in dealing with the "imbalance" in the region. There is a need for countries to unite based on commonalities and shared beliefs. Countries should not work in isolation of each other, but share ideas and good practices.

## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

First Day: 13 October 2015 (Tuesday)

### TECHNICAL SESSION I: CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

**Progress towards Education Sector Development  
Goals, Key Challenges in SAARC Countries**

***Presenter***

Prof Ramachandran, Advisor, NUEPA, India

***Chair***

Mr Chowdhury Mufad Ahmed, Additional Secretary  
Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh





## Objectives

- To take stock of the achievements, gaps, and challenges on achieving EFA goals in the region.
- To provide successful, innovative approaches, and policy interventions to achieve the unfinished EFA business in the region

The South Asia region has three of the most populous countries in the world (India, Bangladesh and Pakistan), two with small populations (Maldives and Bhutan) and is home to a quarter of humanity. **Prof Ramachandran** summarized the progress made against the EFA goals and highlighted the unfinished issues around each of the goals.



In 1999, South and West Asia lagged behind most of the regions in the world in terms of key indicators associated with EFA. Since then, South and West Asia have made significant progress towards the EFA goals, especially EFA Goal 2 on universal primary education, and EFA Goal 5 on gender equality. Across the region, primary education institutions have recorded substantial increase with marked improvements in access to and participation in primary education. A few countries in the region have reached gender parity in enrolment rate in primary and secondary education, while gender gaps have been reduced in the other countries.

However, the overall picture of EFA in the region is mixed. Progress towards EFA Goal 1 on Early Childhood Care and Education (EFA Goal 1) has been mixed

across the region. Progress has been insufficient and uneven in the case of EFA Goals 3, 4, and 6. Significant challenges remain in the case of youth and adult skills (EFA Goal 3), adult literacy (EFA Goal 4), and quality of education (EFA Goal 6). The EFA national reviews conducted in 2014 by the countries in South Asia pointed out that some EFA goals would not be met by the year 2015. The EFA agenda thus remains unfinished in the region.

Countries in the region need to pursue these goals as an integral part of the post-2015 education development agenda.

**Early Childhood Care:** Significant progress has been made in bringing down under-5 mortality rate, but the MDGs' target of reducing the under-5 mortality rate by 2/3<sup>rd</sup> between 1990 and 2015 is unlikely to be achieved in the South Asian region. Substantial declines in Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal have taken place (the countries are likely to meet the MDG 4 target), with Afghanistan and Sri Lanka at either end of the spectrum with 85 and 10 per 1000 live births respectively in 2015. Stunting continues to be a major issue of concern in this age group for the region, with about 37% of the under 5 children affected by moderate or severe stunting in 2012.

In pre-primary education, enrolment went up between 1999 and 2012 (over 3 times in India, about 4 times in Nepal, 83% in the Maldives, 62% in Bangladesh and 36% in Pakistan). It is also encouraging to know that overall GER in pre-primary education went up during the said period (21% worldwide) with South and West Asia showing the most significant improvement of 23%. Nepal showed the highest increase in participation in pre-primary education (77%) followed by Maldives (44%). While Bhutan and Bangladesh, have shown progress, they still need to improve the GER.

Challenges around achieving the goal for early childhood care include inequality in participation in pre-primary Education; children from disadvantaged population groups still lack access to ECCE due to non-availability of sufficient ECCE services in rural areas; quality-related deficiencies in ECCE services; inappropriate curriculum; the lack of qualified and trained teachers; and ineffective pedagogy remain a major challenge relating to ECCE services.

**Universal Primary Education:** Enrolment in primary education improved by 24.4 % between 1999 and 2012 in South and West Asia with almost sevenfold rise in enrolment in Afghanistan, 37% in Bhutan being the highest % increase in the region. 186.5 million Children were enrolled in 2012. A 16% increase in Adjusted Net Enrolment Ratio (ANER) took place in the same period for the South and West Asia region but it is still short of universal enrolment though Bangladesh (96%), India (99%), Maldives (98%) and Nepal (99%) show near universal enrolment and Bhutan (from 56% to 91%) and Nepal (from 69% to 99%) have recorded the most rapid improvement in Primary Education ANER since 1999.

However, a major issue of concern is the near stagnation in the survival rate to the last grade in Primary Education, the South and West Asia rate being at 64% in 1999 and 2012. Sri Lanka is the only country close to the goal of universal education with a 98% survival rate at the primary level. Bhutan and Maldives are performing relatively better than the other countries.

It is encouraging to note that there was phenomenal progress in reduction of out-of-school children at the primary level in the South and West Asia region since 1999 (73.3%). Nepal, India and Bhutan were able to reduce it more than 80%. Clearly, there are a number of challenges in universalizing primary education across the entire region and the following have to be addressed:

**Difficulty in reaching the hardest-to-reach and most disadvantaged children:** Disadvantaged primary school-age children such as children with disabilities, children in remote locations, children belonging to nomadic families, migrant children, urban poor children, and other vulnerable/disadvantaged groups continue to face difficulties in pursuing their education and remain out of school. Lower level of participation in education by children with special needs continues to be a challenge.

**Insufficient schools and school infrastructure:**

Although improvements in infrastructure have been made over the years, the lack of schooling facilities in hilly/remote areas, especially for lower secondary and upper/higher secondary education, remains an important constraint in countries like Afghanistan, Nepal, and Pakistan. Long distances to schools in mountainous and remote areas continue to prevent access to schools and constitute deterrents to teachers.

**Enrolment ratios in lower secondary education are lower than that in primary education in some countries:**

Except for Maldives and Sri Lanka, enrolment ratios in lower secondary education are much lower than that in primary education. The GERs in lower secondary education ranged from 52 per cent in Pakistan and 63 per cent in Afghanistan to 100 per cent in Sri Lanka and 104 per cent in the Maldives. The higher levels of transition from primary to lower secondary education and the lower levels of GERs in secondary education in most countries in South Asia indicate that a large proportion of pupils enrolled in secondary education drop out before completing secondary education.

**Dropout rates:** Regionally, drop-out rates before the last grade of primary education has changed only marginally, from 38% in 1999 to 36% in 2011. More than one-third of children who enter primary education drop-out before they reach the last grade, putting the region far away from the goal of universal retention. Sri Lanka with a drop-out rate of 2% before the last grade of primary education is the only country that has achieved the goal of universal retention.

**Out-of-school children (OOSC) of primary school age:**

The absolute number of out-of-school children still remains high, especially in the three high-population countries in the region. Universal access to primary education continues to be an unfinished agenda in the region. Children with disabilities and children with special needs constitute a significant proportion of OOSC.

**Out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age:**

The higher proportion of out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school-age remains an obstacle towards achieving EFA Goal 3. South Asia region had about 42% of the total number of out-of-school adolescents in 2012.

**Regional Disparities in Education:** Significant disparities exist, both between and within countries, in availability of schooling facilities, enrolment ratios, retention, progression and learning outcomes, often on the basis of gender, socio-economic status, geographical location, and disability. While the regional average of primary education ANER was 94% in 2012, the ANER ranged from 72% in Pakistan to 99% in India and Nepal. While the regional average transition rate from primary to secondary education was 89% in 2011, the rate ranged from 77% in Bangladesh and 98% in Sri Lanka. While the regional average GER in lower secondary education was 73% in 2012, the GER ranged from 49% in Pakistan to 104% in the Maldives.

**Youth and Adult Skills:** Transition rate in the South and West Asia region between 1999 and 2011 changed from 88% to 89%, respectively. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka recorded transition rates from primary to secondary education of above 90% with India and Maldives being at 89%. The transition rates were 82% and 77% for Nepal and Pakistan, respectively. GER in Lower secondary education has substantially increased since 1999 in the South and West Asia (21% increase compared to the world average of 13%). All South Asian countries show higher participation in lower secondary education since 1999.

Similarly, there has been an increase in the participation in secondary education (lower and upper/higher secondary), especially those with low levels in 1999. Data for 2010-14 indicates that less than 60% of the upper secondary school age cohort was enrolled in upper/higher secondary education. The youth literacy rate also increased in the South and West Asia region by 4% since 1999. Bangladesh (16%), India (10%) and Nepal (12%) show significant increases with Pakistan showing an increase of 6%. Maldives and Sri Lanka, with already high rates, continued to maintain the same.

The challenges that need to be addressed are as follows :

**Out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age:** The higher proportion of out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school-age remains an obstacle towards achieving EFA goal 3. South Asian region was home to about 42% of the total number of out-of-school adolescents in 2012.

**Insufficient opportunities for skill development:** Progress in terms of expansion of vocational education and training programmes in the region remains limited. The enrolment in vocational education and training programmes is only a small proportion of the total enrolment in secondary and upper/higher secondary education. The existing vocational education programmes in most countries continue to be characterized by several weaknesses. These include: course contents not in tune with the requirement of industry and other employment sectors, inadequate linkage of schools with industry, paucity of trained vocational education teachers, low quality teaching-learning materials.

## Adult Literacy

A goal of 50% improvement in adult literacy level from the 2000 level is a huge challenge for the South and West Asia as it means achieving an adult literacy rate of at least 80% by 2015. The current level of 63% is far below the world average of 84%. Six South Asian countries showed significant improvements of a change more than 5% points.

Literacy remains a challenge in South Asia and has to be adequately addressed. It had about 384.4 million adult illiterates out of a total of 768.3 million adult illiterates in the world, about half of the world's illiterates. The number of adult illiterates in five countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) in South Asia remain at comparatively high levels. The data projected for the year 2015 indicates that South Asia would have about 380.4 million adult illiterates out of an estimated total of 751.4 million adult illiterates in the world. South Asia is likely have about 50.7 percent of the projected world's illiterates in 2015.

## Gender Equality

GPI in GER in pre-primary education changed from 0.94 to 1.02 during 1999-2012 in South Asia with Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka achieving gender parity for GER in primary education and Bhutan being close to it (0.99). Similarly, the GPI for primary education ANER in South Asia region has increased from 0.82% to 1.00 during 1999-2012. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka have achieved gender parity for primary education with Nepal close to achieving the same for ANER at the primary level.

At the lower secondary level, the GPI for GER improved to 0.98 with six of the eight countries having achieved gender parity and Bhutan being close to achieving it. The GPI starts declining in upper/higher secondary education with it being 0.88 in 2012 (Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka have a GPI over 1 and Bhutan is close to it. GPI in GER in secondary education in South Asia increased from 0.75 (1999) to 0.92 (2012). Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka achieved gender parity for GER in Secondary Education while it improved from 0.7 (1999) to 0.94 (2011) for India. Similarly, GPI for youth literacy has increased in six countries in South Asia but only Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka achieving gender parity in youth literacy rates. Significant progress has been made in India, Nepal and Pakistan. GPI in adult literacy rate in the region increased from 0.66 to 0.70 during the period 1995-2004 to 2005-2012. The Maldives has achieved gender parity for adult literacy rates and it has increased for 6 countries.

Addressing gender issues is a matter of urgency; the education system does not have to work towards achieving gender parity but also ensure sensitivity in curriculum development as well as in training teachers and developing a gender sensitive learning environment. The challenges for addressing gender equality include the following:

#### **Barriers that restrict continuation of girls' education:**

Once in school, especially at the secondary stage, there are several barriers that prevent a significant proportion of girls from continuing their education. Achieving gender equality in education, therefore, requires not only ensuring that girls and boys have equal opportunities to participate in education, but also ensuring that students are educated in a gender sensitive learning environment.

**Gender disparity in youth literacy rates:** The relatively higher gender gaps in youth and adult literacy rates in South and West Asia remains a principal challenge. Despite progress towards gender parity for youth literacy rate, South and West Asia region continue to be a region with higher level of gender disparities in youth literacy, with the youth literacy rates for male and female population (age 15-24 years) being 86% and 74%, respectively. The GPI for youth literacy rate ranges from 0.52 in Afghanistan and 0.80 in Pakistan to 1.00 in the Maldives, 1.01 in Sri Lanka and 1.05 in Bangladesh.

**Gender disparity in adult literacy rates:** South and West Asia also continue to be the region with higher level of gender disparities in adult literacy, with adult literacy rates for male and female population being 74% and 52%, respectively. The GPI for adult literacy rate ranges from 0.40 in Afghanistan and 0.60 in Bhutan to 0.97 in Sri Lanka and 1.00 in the Maldives. It is clear that major efforts are needed to raise the literacy levels of girls and women.

## Quality of Education

All countries are now conducting national assessment of learning outcomes while only India had done so before 1999. It is expected that they generate information to the extent that students attain expected learning outcomes at different levels of school education, monitor improvement in children's learning and assess system performance and help design and implement education policies and practices to enhance quality of education and improve student learning outcomes.

**Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR):** PTR for the region stays more or less the same at 35:1 over time despite an increase of 26% in primary school teachers (5.5 million in 2012). While most countries reduced the PTR with the largest reductions in Bhutan (42:1 to 24:1) and Nepal (39:1 to 26:1), it went up in Afghanistan (33:1 to 44:1) for the years 1999 and 2011, respectively. 82% of the primary teachers in South and West Asia region were trained (2012) ranging from 58% in Bangladesh to 95% in Nepal where it increased from 15% in 1999. This also led to the sharp decline in PTR mentioned above.

**Assessment of learning achievement:** The assessment of learning achievement in countries in the region suggest that learning achievement of a significant proportion of students at the primary stage of education does not measure up to the expected levels. The unsatisfactory levels of student learning underscore the fact that fostering quality education and improving learning outcomes should be the key focus of attention in the coming years.

**Disconnect between the existing school curriculum and the needed skill acquisition:** There are serious disconnects between the existing school education curriculum and the curricular thrusts that are needed for promoting the acquisition by students of relevant skills required for decent work and a better life in a rapidly changing world. A key challenge in this

context is expanding opportunities for acquiring relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for work and entrepreneurship, skills that enables individuals to participate actively and responsibly in their communities, and contribute to peaceful and sustainable development through Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development.

**Shortage of qualified teachers and trained and competent personnel for educational management in some countries:**

There are Teacher and quality-related deficiencies; likewise, education management personnel. Insufficient capacity to collect, analyze and process education data required for effective educational planning and management as well as for tracking the progress towards education sector development goals.

There is lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems as well as budgetary constraints in the educator sector across countries.

## Country Presentations on Education Challenges and Priorities of Action

### *Chair*

Mr Phuntsho Wangdi, Department of School Education  
Government of Bhutan



## Objectives

- To provide overview of the Education Challenges/EFA Unfinished Agenda of each country
- To share the lessons learned and priorities of action of each country
- To identify priorities of Action for SAARC collaboration for Education 2030

## AFGHANISTAN

### Presenter

Ministry of Education, Afghanistan

While the participant from Afghanistan could not come to Delhi, a presentation for the Conference was sent to UNESCO. Significant progress has been made against the EFA goals since 2001 in Afghanistan. They are as follows:

### Goal (1): Expanding Early Childhood Care and Education

ECCE students increased from 99,977 in 2003 to 1,226,533 in 2013. Despite having several agencies involved in the provision of ECCE, Afghanistan's attention to ECCE has so far been negligible. A policy for the pre-school area has been drafted and a pre-school unit has been established within the MOE, however, the development of pre-school curriculum and learning materials has not yet been finalized.

### Goal (2): Universalization of Primary/Basic Education

In 2001, less than one million children were enrolled in schools with almost no girls registered. In 2013, the number of children enrolled increased to 8.4 million of whom 39% are girls.

- The number of teachers in GE has increased from 20,700 in 2002 to 187,000 in 2013, of which 32% are females.
- The drop-out rate has shown a gradual decrease from 7.5% in 2011 to 6% in 2013.
- The survival rate to the last grade of primary education was 58% (60% boys/ 54% girls) in 2013.

- The effective transition rate from primary to secondary level has improved from 81% in 2009 to 91% in 2013.
- Pupil/ teacher ratio in 2013 was 45:1.
- The total number of schools increased from 3,500 in 2002 to 14,600 in 2013.

### Goal (3): Meeting the learning needs of youths and adults

In 2013, there were 81,812 students studying in 105 institutes and 145 schools of TVET. The GPI in TVET has improved from 0.03 in 2002 to 0.15 in 2013, which is still poor. There are still challenges facing the TVET system such as lack of family trust, lack of standard certification and accreditation system, and lack of job opportunities in the job market.

### Goal (4): Adult Literacy

While the Ministry of Education calculates literacy rate as 36%, AMICS provides the lowest of 31.4% (female 17%, Male 45%). Levels of literacy have improved and there still remains at least 11 million Afghans age 15 and above suffering from literacy inequalities.

### Goal (5): Gender Parity and Equality

Although the GPI at the primary level has increased over time (0.74 in 2013), there is a large gender gap in the education sector.

- The literacy rate of women is less than one-third of that of men, and it is consistently low across all provinces.
- In 2013, female enrolment proportion was 39.3% with 40.8% at primary and 34.9% in upper secondary.

- Out of the total 257,807 MOE employees in 2013, 27.2% were female compared to 26.4% in 2012.

## Goal (6): Improving the Quality of Education

Assessing learning outcomes in Afghanistan is currently a challenge since the education system does not yet have standardized performance tests or national examinations at primary or secondary schools. Only 43% of teachers have the required minimum qualification (grade 14 and above) to teach at all levels of general education. Education expenditure as a percentage of GDP has fluctuated between 2.68 and 4.60 from 2009 to 2013.

The challenges for achieving EFA include:

**(1) Access to quality education is not fully ensured at all levels:** an estimated 3.3 million of primary school-aged children are still out of school. Studies suggest less than half of children are able to meet the minimum required learning outcomes.

The increasing number of graduates from grade 12 cannot be absorbed in the higher education institutions and neither in the labour market. The education sector is under-funded. The proportion of education as a percentage of GDP is still not only low, but the ECCE, higher education, literacy, and TVET also have inadequate proportion of the education fund envelope.

## Recommendations

- To enable greater access to children in remote areas by providing safe learning spaces, and continuing to expand access to lower and upper secondary education, is needed.
- Commitments to literacy should be explicitly included in the National Priority Programme.
- A holistic approach is needed to improve the quality of education, with focus on inputs (teachers, textbooks, and facilities), process (teaching, learning and management) outcomes (performance and behaviour change).
- It is recommended to introduce a system of GIS-based school mapping based on disaggregated data classified by sex, rural/urban, province/district, private/public, language and ethnicity. In addition, social efforts should be initiated

to support and increase the number of female teachers.

In a situation of limited financial resources and increased competition, it becomes critical for all budget units to justify financial requests for their plans to the Ministry of Finance by reference to the plans' potential contributions to higher order strategic goals such as ANDS and MDGs.

## Bangladesh

### Presenter

Dr Md. Abu Hena Mostofa Kamal,  
Additional Director General (Additional Secretary), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of Bangladesh



Bangladesh has a large population and is one of most densely populated countries in the world. There are huge challenges concerning inequality, poverty and lack of funds for health and education sector although significant achievements have been made to deal with the issues. Bangladesh is constitutionally committed to the right to basic education. Primary Education is the responsibility of the state. Since independence, many initiatives to improve its education system in line with the National Development Objectives and obligations and commitments made in international forums on EFA and MDG such as:

- Adoption of EFA National Plan of Action I and II: NPA II (2003-2015), the Non-formal Education



Policy, 2006 and National Education Policy 2010 and National Skills Development Policy 2011.

- Free textbook for all students from pre-primary to secondary level (330 million textbooks)  
Education stipend and safety net support programmes for out-of-reach children and working children.
- Big sector wide program in primary education. SWAP in secondary education is being designed.
- Infrastructure improvement programmes.
- Use of ICT in education.
- Government, NGO and private sector cooperation.

Early Childhood Education and Care is taking place gradually. Reduction in IMR has been achieved ahead of MDG targets, and pre-primary education has been mainstreamed with a 78% coverage. Universal primary education is the sphere where the country has achieved tremendous success. Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) at the primary level is 108.4% (Boys 104.6% and Girls 112.3%) in 2014, Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was at 97.7% (Boys 96.6% and Girls 98.8%) in 2014 and Drop out decreased significantly but still quite high (21%). Sufficient emphasis has been put on youth and adult learning and equal emphasis on skill development and adult literacy. Secondary level enrolment is around 50% and enrolment in technical and vocational education has increased from 6% to 15% since 2010. Adult literacy is still low with an increase from 47.9% in 2000 to 59.8% in 2013.

Gender parity in adult literacy is still elusive and there is an insufficient funding from the government and the donors. Mass awareness, social upliftment and strong policy framework and institutional intervention are of high importance in the present day context. There is now gender parity in GER and NER in the primary and secondary level and girls' enrolment surpasses that of boys. Drop out of boys is higher in primary level while it is higher for girls at the secondary level.

The gender gap in adult literacy and in vocational-technical education and training, though improving, still persists. Enrolment of girls in technical education increased by 44% since 2010. Bangladesh is increasing the number of women teachers as that plays an important part in retaining girls in schools.

A lot of emphasis has been put on improving the quality of education and a sector-wide programme called PEDP 3 has been launched. Pupil/teacher ratios

declined but still high: 40:1 at primary and 37:1 at secondary level. At the primary level, around 83% and at the secondary level 73 % teachers are trained. As about 80% of the schools run double shifts effective contact hour is limited. Geographical discrepancies exist between rural and urban and from district to district and school to school. Learning assessments indicate major challenges in ensuring desired learning outcomes.

### Lessons learned are as follows:

- Never-enrolled children are mostly from ultra-poor and poor families.
- Skills development of young people is recently getting more attention than before.
- ECD and adult education requires more support from Government and donors.
- Focus should be on sustaining and improving gender parity across secondary education.
- Learning outcomes and completion could not keep pace with the achievement in participation and gender parity.
- Education is yet to get the required priority in national budget and inadequate funding hampered educational development.

### Looking Ahead:

- Work together to make education a priority in national budget of SAARC countries.
- Identify the key potential collaboration and prepare a framework of action.
- Develop a workable mechanism for documenting best practices, high-end research and innovation.
- Ensure closer and more effective collaboration among the SAARC Secretariat, UNESCO and UNICEF.
- Promote linkage and collaborations among interested institutes of the countries.

## Bhutan

### Presenter

#### Mr Tshewang Tandin

Department of Higher and Adult Education, Government of Bhutan



Bhutan recognizes that education is a pre-requisite for nation-building. Historically, Monastic education was predominant in the country until the 1960s, although modern educational system was introduced as far back as 1914. Education then was mainly about numeracy and literacy.

The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) has always accorded the education sector its highest priority. The education system is structured as follows:

Primary Education (PP-VI)	=	7 years
Basic Education (PP-X)	=	11 years
Higher Secondary Education (XI-XII)	=	2 years
Tertiary Education	=	3-4 years
Vocational Education (after X & XII)		

Currently, there are 172, 393 students across stages in Bhutan, 8000 Teachers, 551 schools and 107 ECRs. With various initiatives from RGoB, Bhutan has NER of 95% and 85% for Primary and Basic Education, respectively. Adult literacy rate is 55.3% as of 2012.

The presentation outlined the challenges in meeting full access to education, achieving quality education,

equity in education and achieving system efficiency, thus:

### Challenges in achieving access in education

- Sustainability of small schools due to declining enrolment trends in rural areas
- Difficulty in deployment of adequate teachers
- Education diversification, especially Technical and Vocational Education
- Challenges to meet full enrolment because of the physically-challenged children
- Meeting the net enrolment owing to migrant population, nomadic communities, drop outs

### Challenges in achieving quality in education

- Equitable learning outcomes for all the children
- Rising expectations of the people
- Schools with vulnerable infrastructures
- Teacher and school leadership competencies
- Private participation for ECCD centers

### Challenges in achieving System Efficiency

- Intra and inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration
- Mandates of District Education Office
- Institutional linkages
- Investment in Education
- Legal Basis for Education (No Education Act and Teacher Council/Body)

### Challenges in adult literacy and lifelong learning

- Increasing adult literacy to 90+% by 2020 challenged by scattered settlements
- Alternative modes of continuing education such as MOOC and open learning centres are not in place
- Community Learning Centres for skills enhancement of out-of-school youth are yet to take off

## PRIORITIES OF ACTION IN BHUTAN

In line with Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024, primary focus shall be given to the following, thus:

- Enhancing access and equity in education;
- Revamping curriculum and assessment to enrich student learning;
- Raising learning outcomes of students comparable to leading international standards;
- Transforming teaching into a profession of choice;
- Ensuring high performing schools and leaders;
- Leveraging ICT for learning;
- Enhancing value-education and well-being;
- Facilitating system transformation, delivery capabilities and capacities.

## Priorities for Action for SAARC Collaboration in Post-2015 Education Agenda as identified by Bhutan:

- Establish greater institutional linkages for support and coordination.
- Establish SAARC Science Forum to look after the improvement of STEM subjects in the region.
- Establish SAARC Education Forum for teacher and student exchanges between member nations to foster sharing of ideas and people to people interactions.
- Establish SAARC Qualification Framework.
- Linkages in open learning and continuing education.

## India

**Presenter**  
**Prof Ramachandran**  
Advisor, NUEPA, India



There has been a major expansion of school facilities, especially primary schools. Significant progress has been made towards all the EFA goals, particularly in regard to Goal 2 on universal primary education, and Goal 5 on gender equality. Significant challenges still remain in the case of ECCE (goal 1), youth and adult skills (goal 3), adult literacy (goal 4) and quality of education (goal 6). The EFA agenda thus remains unfinished in the country. Progress towards EFA goals needs to be accelerated as integral part of the post-2015 development agenda.

Enrolment in pre-primary education increased almost threefold from 13.87 million (1999) to 41.3 million (2010). Enrolment in elementary education increased with 13.4 more boys and 28.8 million more girls getting enrolled in elementary education in 2013-14 compared to 2000-01. The increased enrolment of girls (42.8%) compared to boys (14%) indicates improvement in gender parity in elementary education. This can be attributed to the availability of schooling facilities. 98% of the rural habitations had a primary school within 1 km and almost 96% had an upper primary school within 3 km. 60, 37,000 school were added between 2000-01 and 2013-14. 24 states out of 36 have reached universal access to primary schooling facilities. There were more than 600,000 schools imparting primary and upper primary education in 2013-14 than in 2001-02. With an ANER in primary education being 99% by 2011, India has near universal enrolment in primary education.

## PRIORITY AREAS OF ACTION

- Integrated multi-sector initiatives, including access to health care, balanced nutrition and pre-school education, for promoting universal access to quality ECCE services.
- Addressing the residual access and equity gaps in primary and secondary education with a view to reducing and eventually eliminating gender and social category gaps and inequalities in access to education and in teaching-learning processes and learning outcomes.
- Ensuring upward transition/mobility of students from primary to secondary and from secondary to tertiary levels of education, including through alternative learning systems such as open and distance learning modes, use of MOOC, etc.
- Expanding skill development opportunities, including technical and vocational education and training, within the framework of National Skills Qualification Framework, to respond to changing job profiles and labour market needs.
- Fostering quality education with focus on achievement by students of relevant learning outcomes and improved teacher quality and performance.
- Promoting effective use of ICTs for improving access to secondary and tertiary education, enhancing the quality of teaching-learning process, training of teachers, and strengthening educational planning and management.
- Building a lifelong learning and literacy support system.
- Institutionalizing a responsive, decentralized and accountable systems of educational governance and management and professionalizing institutional leadership.
- Strengthening monitoring of educational goals/targets, including periodic assessment of progress in learning outcomes.
- Well-targeted financing of education in order to ensure that 20 percent of total government expenditure and 6% of GDP is allocated for education sector.

Transition rate from primary to upper primary has improved and was 86.7% in 2012-13 and is now above 89% for both boys and girls. Enrolment rates in upper primary level are near 90% in 2013-14. There has been a significant reduction in OOSC at the primary level with a steady decline between 2006-07 (16.9%) and 2012 (1.4%) due to the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan with OOSC in 2014-15 estimated to be at 0.6 million. Drop-out rate has been declining steadily, being 4.3% at the primary level and 3.8% at the upper primary level. The enrolment and participation in secondary education has shown an increase from 27.6 million in 2001-01 to 59.6 million in 2013-14 mainly due to the initiatives like the Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan which has a target of 90% in two to three years.

Youth literacy rate has increased from 76.43% in 2001 to 86.14% in 2011 and adult literacy has increased from 61% in 2001 to 69.3% in 2011. However, rural-urban disparity in adult literacy is a principal challenge. While gender parity has been achieved at the primary, upper primary and elementary stages of education,

gender equality still requires more attention and time. More emphasis is being given to improving learning outcomes. National learning assessments are being done from grades 3, 5, 8 and 10. These still demonstrate shortfalls and a significant proportion of students at primary and upper primary education not measuring up to expected levels.

A critical element in enhancing participation in learning is the presence of motivated and trained teachers. 76.6% of all schools and 82.9% of the government schools have trained regular teachers at the elementary level of education by 2013-14. The government need to do a little more to ensure that there are more than 95% of trained teachers in the education system. Public expenditure on education had increased steadily over time and is near 4% of the GDP in 2011-12. There has been an increased enhancement in absolute terms of about 5 times between 2000 and 2010 due to the growing economy though India still needs to do more to get to the target of 6% of the GDP in the next few years.

Even though substantial progress has been made, significant challenges remain in case of EFA Goal 1 on ECCE, youth and adult skills (EFA goal 3), adult literacy (EFA goal 4) and quality of education (Goal 6). There is a need to create an acceleration towards all EFA goals. These unfinished goals and the new SDGs with a focus on SDG 4 *providing equitable and inclusive access for quality education for all* may provide the necessary momentum to achieve the unfinished agenda.

## Maldives

### Presenter

**Ms Fathimath Azza,**

Director General, Ministry of Education,  
Government of Maldives



Maldives has achieved MDG+ status and EFA goals 1, 2, 4, and 5. However, gaps remain and there are EFA unfinished agenda, thus:

**EFA Goal 1:** Maldives has made significant progress in ECCE. Yet, the challenge lies on equitable access of ECCD to special needs children and enhancing the quality of the programmes offered.

**EFA Goal 2:** Maldives has reached universal access to at least 10 years of basic education, however challenge remains in bringing children from vulnerable groups and developing alternative learning programmes.

Recent changes in government policy means that every child is entitled to 14 years of free education starting from 2016.

**EFA Goal 3:** Maldives is at a juncture where preparing students on skills education is taking prominence among the key policy makers – and there has been extensive collaboration with the private sector to

implement an internship programme where 25% of the students completing grade ten in 2015 are already enrolled. Further, another 20% of students starting grade 8 in 2015 are enrolled in the Edexcel Btech programme which is a skills based programme.

**EFA Goal 4:** There is a need to redefine ‘literacy’ to reflect the different functionalities needed to survive in the modern world as well as the changing needs of the Maldivian society.

**EFA Goal 5:** Maldives has achieved gender parity in education, however, gender sensitization, values and attitudes need to be addressed through gender sensitized curricular and pedagogy. A further challenge is seeking more engagement of boys.

**EFA Goal 6:** With regard to quality of education, important new steps have recently been put in place; a separate Quality Assurance Department has been established; a new teacher job categorization framework has been put in place with teachers requiring to be better trained. The implementation of a new curriculum has been initiated in 2015 with a target of completing implementation in 2017; a new TVET stream has been introduced into the curriculum. The results of these interventions remain to be seen.

### PRIORITY OF ACTIONS FOR MALDIVES UNDER EFA

**Goal 1:** Provision for children with disabilities and early assessment and intervention are being made.

**Goal 2:** Understand better the out-of-school population and design alternative learning programmes for these children.

**Goal 3:** Expand the provision of TVET stream to all schools and design more streamlined partnerships with the employment sector.

Ensure curriculum integration of life-skills across all key stages

**Goal 4:** Promote dialogue at policy level on the importance of redefining ‘literacy’ to reflect the different functionalities needed to survive in the modern world as well as the changing needs of the Maldivian society

**Goal 5:** Ensure that gender sensitive teaching and learning materials are used in the schools across the country.

**Goal 6:** Establish a monitoring mechanism to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the new initiatives that have been put in place

## Priorities for action for SAARC collaboration on the post-2015 education agenda:

- Collaboration on monitoring and resource sharing on the indicators for the SDG on education both at regional level and global level.
- Collaborations on establishing base-lines
- Further resource sharing and sharing best practices in areas like effective models on skills education and data collection and collation.

## Nepal

### Presenter

**Mr Kamleshwar Kumar Sinha,**  
Deputy Secretary - General, Ministry of  
Education, Government of Nepal

After giving a geographical overview of Nepal, Mr Sinha talked about the EFA goals for Nepal. While the 6 EFA goals followed by all countries are valid, Nepal has added a 7<sup>th</sup> Goal, namely, multi-lingual education with basic and primary education being imparted through the mother-tongue. Admissions to Grade 1 after an ECED experience has gone up from 9.6% in 2002 to 60% in 2013. Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at primary level has shown a steady increase from 1995 (67.5%) to 2013 (95.6%) overall and was



55.6% and 95% for the girls over the same period of time. NER at the Secondary level has increased from 17.3% in 1995 to 54.9% in 2013. The NER for girls at the secondary level for the same time periods were

## CURRENT PRIORITY OF THE NEPAL GOVERNMENT

- Rehabilitation and reconstruction of educational infrastructure and the creation of a proper learning environment for students.
- Quality enhancement through teacher qualification and upgrading, developing learning materials, teacher training and creating child friendly school environment.
- Focus on Out-of-School Children through support in income generation of family, minimum enabling conditions, education guarantee scheme and providing scholarships and mid-day meal in schools.
- Expansion of TVET by adding the vocational education stream in school education.
- Expansion of ICT facilities with all secondary schools to receive computers, printers and internet facilities. There is a programme to produce digital materials and provision of training teachers in ICT.
- Decentralization in education through a school based management system based on empowering the School Management Committee and the Headmaster.

12% and 54.6%, respectively. Children repeating classes (repetition rate) at the primary level has steadily been declining from 2006 to 2013. It declined from 19.5% to 9.8% overall with boys and the rate for girls being 20.2% to 9.7% over the same period of time. At the SLC (secondary level certificate) the pass percentage has fluctuated from 22.3% in 1990 to 41.57% in 2013 with a high of 61.62% in 2000. This is due to political instability and strikes over the past decades in the country. Literacy rate has almost doubled from 33% in 1990 to 65.9% in 2013. Gender parity in school education has significantly improved and GPI at NER at primary level to secondary level is almost achieved.

## Challenges faced by Nepal

The devastation caused by the recent earthquakes has impacted educational infrastructure. Quality enhancement is seen as a challenge especially in the context of persisting inequalities (wealth, geography, gender). Adaptation of ICT in Education is critical but there are inadequate ICT facilities. Development of digital materials as well as training a large number of teachers in the use of ICT are seen as major bottlenecks. Out of school children is another major challenge and significant work needs to be done in identification, location and creating enabling conditions to bring them to school. Creating a sense of accountability among stakeholders is also a major challenge in Nepal. There is a demand for vocational training, but sufficient funds to adequately

respond to this growing need are currently not available. The Government budgetary allocation for education is currently 12.6% of the national budget. There is urgent need for capacity building in terms of enhancing system capacities, undertaking structural reforms and having the readiness to adapt to the new federal structure adopted by Nepal through its new Constitution.

### LESSONS LEARNT

- Visible progress in achieving EFA goals but steady and uneven progress
- Tackling inequalities is a major challenge for the Government
- Inadequate resource for education (Government and DPs)
- Enhanced ownership and political leadership
- Increased public investment – highest budget among sub-sector
- Devolved authority and decision-making at local level

### PRIORITY OF SAARC

- Quality education for all up to secondary level
- Promotion of lifelong learning
- Providing equal access to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education
- ICT application in education
- Establishment of SAARC permanent education organization network
- Establish the SAARC as literate region

## Pakistan

### Presenter

#### Ms Vibeke Jensen

Director, UNESCO Office in Islamabad on behalf of the Government of Pakistan

**Mr Mohammad Khan Khichi**, who could not come to Delhi for the Conference sent the presentation from Pakistan to UNESCO. The presentation highlighted that six (6) EFA goals had a clear resonance in the MDG framework, especially MDG 2 and MDG 3.

There are multiple challenges to education in Pakistan. On one hand, there is a high rate of out-of-school children and a low survival rate for completion of primary level of education with frequent grade repetition. On the other hand, the deteriorating law and order situation and recent natural disasters like earthquake and floods have also badly affected the education system.

For issues of *access to education* related to in-school children, strategies/interventions employed by the Government of Pakistan include the hiring of more teachers, strict monitoring of teachers, provision of basic facilities, ensuring no corporal punishment in school and creating incentives to retain students like providing free books, uniforms and food. Similar efforts are being made for children out of school with the establishment of more schools, new schools being set up nearer to communities, creating NFE/ community/feeder schools, providing free education, undertaking awareness campaigns on the importance of education, promoting community involvement in education and enforcement of security/law and order.

For issues of *Quality of education* related to children in school, there are plans for training of teachers and organizing refresher courses, plans for revision of teaching methods, provision of basic facilities in educational institutions and involving community members in monitoring schools. Further interventions suggested are effective monitoring and supervision, rewards and punishments, involvement of community members to monitor schools and ending political interference and promoting merit-based appointments (of teachers) form the core of suggested strategies.

Pakistan prepared a National Plan of Action on MDG Acceleration Framework, and key plans and strategies were developed to improve the situation by the end of 2015. The plan aims to:

- enhance enrolment of OOSC in primary education;
- increase retention at primary level and completion of primary education by all enrolled children;
- improvement in quality of primary education.

The strategies of the National Plan of Action are enrolment of new students in existing schools and in formal schools through provision of an additional room, establishment of new schools to accommodate additional students and creating incentives for attracting and retaining students, especially from disadvantaged groups, including girls. The NPA has impacted key indicators with the NER increasing from 68% to 2012-13 to 72% in 2013-14. The Survival Rate to Grade V in the Public sector has increased from 54% to 62% and drop-out rate in the public sector has decreased from 46% to 38%.

## Sri Lanka

### Presenter

**Ms B.P. Withanage**

Director (Education for All)

Ministry of Education

Government of Sri Lanka



The success in the education field in Sri Lanka is rooted in the pre-independence period, especially due to some important legislations that created an enabling environment for education among people. The Education Law, 1939 and the Free Education Law, 1945 were critical in this. Free and compulsory education, promotion of teaching in mother tongue, student welfare through mid-day meals and scholarships and health services helped in high enrolment and participation in education.

In Sri Lanka, immunization coverage is 97%, with MMR being 39 in 2006. While Sri Lanka is a high risk country for HIV/AIDS, prevalence is still low. There has been a slow decline in child mortality under 5 years when the rate has fallen from 22.7 in 2000 to 12 in 2011. Stunting and malnutrition are still of concern and the trend in stunting has fluctuated. For children under 5, it was 24% in 1993, falling to around 12% in 2000 and again rising to around 24% in 2010. Enrolment in Grade 1 with ECCE experience went up from 75% in 2001 to 94% in 2013. Net Enrolment in Primary Education increased from 92 in 2001 to 98 in 2013. Out of school primary school children were under 3% for all ages from 5-9 years. It was 3.1% in urban areas, 1.6% in rural areas and 4.4 % in the estate areas. NER in secondary education increased from 89% in 2001



to 92% in 2013 with GPI levels steadily being achieved. However, the age groups 15-16 and 17-18 attending school are reported as less than 80% and that percentage of students attending a school in the estate sector is lower than other sectors. Special attention is needed towards this as also at the regional areas in Nuwara Eliya, Puttalam and Batticaloa districts.

Achievements in life skills have improved with TVET enrolment and completion showing an increase between 2005-2011 for both males and females. Overall improvement in Gender Parity Index has taken place in the period with NER in primary education being 1.01 and in secondary education being 1.03. The transition rate from primary cycle to lower secondary cycle also shows a GPI of 1.01. Adult literacy over people over 10 years of ages has increased from 91% in 2001 to 95.5% in 2012.

Challenges: 20% of less than 15-16 year old children are out of school due to social and economic reasons and nearly 25% of the people aged 25 and more have only studied up to grade 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>. This indicates the need to concentrate on non-formal and lifelong education system which is not receiving as much attention as needed with the government focused

on the Compulsory Education Regulation. For modernization, attention must be focused on this area.

Regional disparities and economic and social disparities and unequal distribution of resources continue to be major challenges. This disparity also extends to quality of resources provided among schools as there are differential resources provided to National Schools, Type 1 schools, A, B and C types of schools. Children of marginalized communities continue to face exclusion and have to deal with access and participation issues. There is low quality educational outcomes in vulnerable groups. There are limited non-formal education programmes for drop-outs and school leavers. Schools are being polarized with large schools becoming larger and small schools becoming smaller. Increasing number of small schools in disadvantaged locations are not receiving adequate attention. There is social stigma towards children with disabilities and a lack of quality programmes to address their needs. Census data has shown that there has been an increase in children with disability/special needs after the war. Poor parental awareness about education continues and there is weak service delivery systems in rural and isolated communities.

## WAY FORWARD

- Actions needed to remove demand and supply side barriers faced by marginalised/ disadvantaged groups
- Long term plan for teacher development to improve quality of teaching, better teacher education, recruitment and upgradation of qualifications
- Improve early childhood care and education
- Equal distribution of human and physical resources with an increase in Budget for Education. The present government is planning to increase it to 6% of the GDP.
- Improve quality of Non-formal education and lifelong learning
- Mainstream inclusive education approach and child friendly approach especially at primary and lower secondary levels.
- Development of comprehensive plan for quality improvement with focus moving from competency measured through exams to skill development
- Promote convergence to meet all needs in schools should be a high priority.

## TECHNICAL SESSION II

### WORLD EDUCATION FORUM AND SDG 4

#### SDG 4 and SAARC National and Regional Priorities

**Presenter:**

Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and UNESCO Representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka, UNESCO New Delhi office

**Chair:**

Ms Rina Ray, Additional Secretary, Department of School Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, India



## Objectives

To share the key messages of SDG 4 and reflect on SAARC national and regional priorities to pursue SDG 4.

Taking from the earlier presentations and focusing on the national and regional priorities in the SAARC region, **Mr Aoyagi** posed the questions:

**How do we work together?**

**How do we enhance collaboration in South Asia?**

To contextualize the challenges of EFA and SDGs, he provided information on the situation relating to education across the world, thus:

- One third of countries have achieved all of the measurable EFA goals
- Half of countries Achieved Universal Primary Enrolment
- 121 million children and adolescents were still out of school in 2012
- One third of countries did not reach gender parity in primary education;

- Half of countries did not achieve gender parity in secondary education
- The poorest children are 4 times more likely to be out of school, and 5 times more likely not to complete primary education than the richest children
- The proportion of out of school children in conflict-affected zones has grown since 2000
- There remain pronounced learning gaps between the most and least advantaged students
- Nearly two-thirds of the 781 million adults lacking minimal literacy skills are women

(Source: GMR 2015)

Mr Aoyagi noted gaps in education based on gender and socio-economic factors. He also pointed out the growing proportion of conflict-affected children whose education are impacted and the fact that South Asia is home to 50% of the world's illiterate population.

**Mr Aoyagi presented the challenges of EFA in the SAARC region, thus:**

Indicators	South and West Asia average	Challenges
<b>Gross enrolment ratio at pre-primary level</b>	55% for South and West Asia.	Equitable access to pre -primary education. Huge gap in access among countries
<b>Adjusted net enrolment rate at primary level</b>	94% for South and West Asia	Universal access to primary level is achieved but not for all countries
<b>Gross Enrolment Rate at Lower Secondary Level</b>	81% for South and West Asia	Need to improve access to lower secondary education
<b>Number of OOSC at primary and lower secondary level</b>	9.8 million at primary and 26.5 million at lower secondary	Huge number of out-of-school, largest in the world
<b>Adult Literacy Rates (15 +) population</b>	63% for South and West Asia	410 million adult illiterate
<b>Learning level</b>	-	Very less than expected at both primary and lower secondary level

Source: UIS, GMR latest data



Moving to the SDGs, Mr Aoyagi highlighted that while there are 17 goals and 169 targets in the SDGs<sup>4</sup>, SDG 4 which focuses on education has 7 targets (Target 4.1 - 4.7) and 3 “enablers’ (4.a - 4.c), thus:

**Goal 4.** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

**Target 4.1.** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

**Target 4.2.** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education

**Target 4.3.** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

**Target 4.4.** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

**Target 4.5.** By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

**Target 4.6.** By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

**Target 4.7.** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development

**Target 4.a.** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

**Target 4.b.** By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

**Target 4.c.** By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

Mr Aoyagi shared the ‘positives’ of SDG 4, which he termed as “big win”, thus:

- Recognizes state responsibility- free public education of good quality
- A holistic lifelong learning framework
- Agreement on 1 year of free and compulsory pre-primary education - Universal access to ECCD/ ECCE/Preschool education
- 9 years of free and compulsory quality basic education (Upper Secondary: Free)
- Equity and non-discrimination- gender equality to underpin all policies
- Moves beyond narrow measurable learning outcomes in a few areas, recognizes even wider range of domains of learning
- Goal is universal but with contextualized targets defined to reflect national realities, especially

<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

meeting the needs of marginalized groups

- Widens focus from employability as purpose of education
- The key role of teachers in quality education is reiterated, recognized and prioritized - all learners are taught by qualified, professionally trained, motivated and well supported teachers
- Education for active and effective citizenship is one of the central features
- Mention of education financing

The SDGs are universal but the targets may be defined according to the specific context of each country. As a region, however, Mr Aoyagi suggested for SAARC to have a common approach. Likewise, common indicators for monitoring the implementation and achievement of the SDGs must be designed for the region. In context of SDG 4, Mr Aoyagi presented the priorities for the region, thus:

Mr Aoyagi reiterated what has been mentioned earlier that “the success of the SDGs depends on the success of SDG 4”, as “everything begins and ends with education.”

## PRIORITIES OF SAARC COUNTRIES

- Expand access to pre-primary education
- Significant expansion to access to secondary education
- Concern for large proportion of the world’s out-of-school students residing in South Asia
- Promoting quality education and improving learning outcomes
- Promoting Technical and Vocation Education and Training
- Promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education
- Regard issue of large number of adult illiterates which largely comprise of women and unprivileged section
- Inclusion and equity in and through education
- Financing Benchmarks

## Regional Monitoring Mechanism and Collaboration Framework of UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

### *Presenter*

Mr Said Voffal, Programme Specialist, UIS

### *Chair*

Dr Abdul Muhsin Mohamed, Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Education, Government of Maldives



## Objectives

- To reflect on the situation of South Asia related to UIS work
- To propose regional monitoring mechanism based on SDG 4 indicators for the region
- To provide information on what UIS can offer to SAARC countries for effective implementation of national and regional monitoring mechanism and mode of the support
- To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps
- To get feedback on SAARC Framework from SAARC members

Mr Voffal conveyed renewed commitment from UIS to support Government initiatives towards the achievement of Education 2030 goals. He underscored the role of the UIS in supporting the various agendas of the MDGs and EFA in the last 15 years through the provision of a comprehensive information system. He noted that a redefined information system would be necessary for the new SDGs. While the MDGs have only 8 goals and 18 targets (complemented by 48 technical indicators to measure progress), the new SDGs have 17 goals and 169 targets.

Mr Voffal outlined the UIS collaboration with and support to the South Asia region. The UIS has its Statistical Advisor for the region in New Delhi. It is also currently closely working with the region on the following:

- Measuring and analyzing the characteristics of primary and adolescent Out of School (jointly with UNICEF);
- Improving availability and use of education finance data (NEA project in Nepal and work with other countries);
- Data on teachers: both national and sub-national data.

Mr Voffal recognized major progress on the achievement of the EFA goals by the South Asia region, but noted the existing numerous statistical challenges in terms of measuring progress. He stressed that it was not possible to manage what could not be measured.



Considerable reduction has been made in the number of out-of-school children. UIS is working in collaboration with UNICEF on a project known as Out Of School Initiative which characterizes, analyzes, and assesses the issue of out-of-school children to help develop the next plan of action to bring back these children to school. These children come from vulnerable and marginalized sections of society and there is need to support these groups.

In terms of investment in education, South Asia has still not reached the target of 4-6% of the GDP for education spending, however, there are countries which have spent 8% of its GDP for education. Nevertheless, there are difficulties in obtaining accurate data on the financing of education. There are only few countries that can provide data on education finance strategies. Necessary data on expenditure to

assess and track progress are very scarce, therefore this area remains difficult to monitor. In light of this, UIS is working with a few countries regarding education finance strategies to evaluate the scope of some interventions and see how a country can finance education.

UIS is working on data related to equity in education, including that of teachers' distribution at sub-national level.

The availability and use of data at the national level are important for monitoring and must be considered when putting together indicators. When data are relevant at the national level, it can be used for comparative analysis at the international level.

UIS works on production and dissemination of internationally-comparable Official Statistics. It provides data for the Human Development Index, Gender Inequality Index, Education for All, Knowledge Index, Knowledge Economy Index, ICT Development Index, Global Competitiveness Index, Global Gender Gap, and Global Innovation Index.

The post-2015 agenda is a mix of good news and challenges. With more goals, targets, and indicators than EFA and MDGs, SDGs will focus on equity, ending poverty and sustainability. The scope is comprehensive and the problems are diverse, e.g. lack of data use to design, implement and assess policies; misunderstanding of data and their use; and, insufficient skills of technical staff and lack of resources for sustainable statistical units.

Mr Voffal spoke of the significance of data, noting that data are essential for the SDGs not only to monitor the goals, but *to meet the goals*. Significantly, the indicators for the SDGs can only be defined by major statistical development need.

Towards Education 2030, the UIS is representing UNESCO in the discussion of the IAEG in the UN System through:

1. Thematic leadership in framing and defining educational indicators, and
2. Taking a leading role focused on -
  - Data adequacy including disaggregated data
  - Feasibility and relevance of selected candidate zero or global minimum standard targets

- Challenges in implementing a universal, but country relevant 2030 agenda
- Improvement in data quality, accessibility and transparency
- Potential use of technology

UIS will act as a data-clearing house (or warehouse) for compiling post-2015 indicators from multiple sources. It will put in place observatories on the new thematic areas to help guide their measurement and analysis with due regard to equity and inclusion in education, learning assessment, and improving availability and use of policy relevant education finance data through National Education Accounts (NEA). UIS will also serve as Data Innovation Lab to reduce reporting burdens on countries and giving access to more timely data.

Specifically, UIS will set-up International Observatory of Equity and Inclusion in Education. It will be the Convener in the field of conceptualizing, measuring and tackling equity issues. It will also be the leading platform for international debate on the topic, a main repository of indicators measuring equity in education, methodological guidelines, and equity-related policy documents.

UIS will assume a leading role in setting the learning outcomes processes and outcomes by identifying tools and good practices, e.g. Catalogue of Learning Assessment, and framing the indicator(s) and the targets by leading the technical group which will develop a global universal scale to assess and monitor progress in learning outcomes.

Mr Voffal shared some of the outcomes formulated by the UIS to support countries toward Education 2030 goals, thus:

1. **Transforming data into knowledge:**
  - National agencies need to provide data to the users (policy makers, schools, media, and parents).
  - Engaging countries in the use of data in policy and practice
  - Training national offices in understanding new data needs and reporting
  - Emphasize the need to integrate systems and to use them



## 2. Building Member States' Roadmap to 2030 Together

- To initiate discussions on the identification of national priorities for Education 2030 based on the context, needs, resources, national development strategies and time frame including intermediate benchmarks (e.g. every 3/5 years)
- To facilitate each region's coordination and partnerships in terms of follow-up mechanisms for Education 2030
- To work with Member States and build a road map that address the proposed global indicators with the corresponding data needs

## 3. UIS Support for success: Recognition of Regional/Country Differences

- To reinforce processes at the national level related to good quality internationally-comparable official statistics towards -
- more pertinent and relevant indicators globally and regionally;
- intensive use of technology to collect statistics.
- To help Members States produce new types of data which are more relevant in their context, e.g.
- rotating global thematic module (teachers, ICT in education);
- development of regional data collections.

## 4. Capacity Building: Observatory of Data Innovation

- To design a web-based observatory where countries can find, in a user-friendly way:
- Comparable and top quality global, regional and national data on access, quality, equity, human resources, and educational finance
- Comparable and top quality global, regional and national data useful for identifying needs, target setting and monitoring
- Research Lab in partnership for potential scalable innovation

Suggesting specific ways forward and next steps, Mr Voffal outlined the following:

- Gathering and analyzing information on availability of data to monitor SDG 4: analyzing the result of the survey sent to SAARC countries before this meeting.
- UIS will organize training regional workshops in early 2016 in East and South Asia to:
- Present and train on SDG 4 indicators.
- Consult with countries and assess their needs and priorities in terms of new data to be collected and establish reporting mechanisms.
- Many indicators would require major statistical development and would require important resources to be produced.

## **Collaboration Framework of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) on SAARC Framework**

### ***Presenter***

Mr Venkata Subbarao Ilapavuluri, Chief Programme Coordinator, UIL

### ***Chair***

Mr Kamleshwar Kumar Sinha, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh



## Objectives

- To share collaboration framework of UIL to SAARC member states
- To provide information on what UNESCO Institute for Lifelong learning (UIL) can offer and mode of the support to the SAARC countries to achieve EFA unfinished agenda and streamline SDG goal 4 in line with UNESCO- SAARC MOU, especially on literacy.
- To get feedback on SAARC Framework from SAARC members
- To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps

Literacy is defined in various ways; it is an area that requires consistent action. There have been many initiatives in the promotion of literacy. Besides the EFA goals, the UN Literacy Decade ending in 2013 provided impetus for achieving literacy targets. Yet, “we are still quite far away from what the world has committed itself to achieve.”

UNESCO has been advocating for the creation of a literate world over the last seven decades. Right from its inception, UNESCO has been campaigning for the Right to Education, implementing fundamental education and experimental, functional literacy programmes and ensuring that literacy is accorded an important role in the global education agenda including the EFA goals as well as through its coordinating role in the implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade. But, with about only 2% literacy rate gained during the UN Literacy Decade, literacy is a very important unfinished agenda that needs greater attention and action in the next fifteen years.

**Mr Subbarao** noted the new transformative and ambitious global agenda ahead, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. He noted that the SDGs not only carry forward the unfinished agenda of the EFA but set more ambitious targets for the next 15 years. In calling the SDGs transformative, ambitious and comprehensive agenda, the new agenda define “the world we want”, according to Mr Subbarao.

To achieve the transformative SDG 2030 agenda, however, innovative governance and delivery systems would be required. By the end of 2030, if the landscape of literacy must be different from what it is today, literacy learning will have to be viewed in the context of lifelong learning and embedded in the SDG 2030 agenda with clear explicit linkages within the overall development architecture of each country.



Focusing on SDG 4, he shared the following four (4) targets relevant for UIL’s mission:

4.4: Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

4.5: Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education

4.6: Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

4.7: Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development

Taking stock of the situation, he referred to the United Nations characterizing the present moment as a time of immense challenges and immense opportunities. He noted the following immense challenges:

- 757 million youth and adults not able to read and write; of these, 115 million are youth, two thirds are women.

- Low access to good quality early childhood education and poor quality schooling.
- Digital divide: 34% households in developing countries as compared to more than 80% households have internet access. In LDCs, it is 7% as compared to the global average of 46%.

At the same time, he highlighted the following immense opportunities available:

- In 2015, more than 7 billion mobile cellular subscriptions, up from less than a billion in 2000; 3.2 billion Internet users up from 400 million in 2000, of which 2 billion are from the developing countries.
- New possibilities: solar panels, communication applications in low bandwidth settings

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong learning (UIL) is one of UNESCO's 7 specialist institutions. Its mandate includes the following:

- Lifelong learning policies and strategies
- Literacy and basic skills
- Adult learning and education

Lifelong learning is a concept that gives a new overarching principle to the new education agenda in SDG2030. It is not a new concept but it needs to be defined and made operational. How do we move from 'education for all' to 'lifelong learning for all'? What does this mean in the design of educational systems? How do we enable learners of all ages to access quality learning opportunities? How do we rethink literacy beyond writing and counting and link literacy learning to the diverse life and learning contexts? . What is the impact of media? What is happening with inter-generational learning and intra-generational learning? How are parents educating their children? What happens at home? What happens in the community? What are the informal learning channels?

There are two major UIL initiatives towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, namely:

- Global Alliance for Literacy within the framework of Lifelong learning; and
- UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities.

The Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning is an initiative to rethink literacy and accelerate action synergistically. Its objective is to support countries to scale up literacy efforts for all age groups within a lifelong learning perspective. It is a new multi-stakeholder partnership working that UNESCO and UIL have been mandated to catalyze

– to fulfil a felt need for fostering partnerships for delivering innovative literacy programmes

The backdrop for this new partnership was provided by UNGA and UNESCO General Conference's mandate on post-UNLD literacy work, EFA GMR 2015's observations calling for a more effective implementation, monitoring and a more explicit linkage with development, the World Education Forum at Incheon calling for global and regional collaboration, cooperation, coordination and monitoring.

The past experiences also point to a need for an enlarged, integrated vision - multi-sectoral approach realizing the potential of literacy as a development accelerator, the need for innovative approaches to enhance access to quality literacy learning: multi-modal delivery harnessing the potential of technology, the need for acceleration of implementation through synergized action and progress monitoring to stay on track

Mr Subbarao requested the participants to give their views on how the Global Alliance can meaningfully play its role and foster partnerships at global, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels.

The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities is an initiative to make lifelong learning for all a reality at the city level, connecting it with the sustainable development agenda and using formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning. Thus far, this network has undertaken its First International Conference at Beijing (2013) and Second International Conference at Mexico City (2015). Since its launch, 500 Mayors from various Member States have been involved, out of which 12 Mayors took initiative in the last two years to make cities as "learning cities".

Global Network of Learning Cities is a framework where the local administrative authorities will ensure lifelong learning opportunities for all its citizens.

In creating a SAARC-UIL collaborative framework, the following may be considered:

- A Centre for Literacy and Lifelong Learning possibly within the SAARC University;
- A Regional Alliance for Literacy within the framework of lifelong learning;
- Innovative literacy programmes using ICT to scale up literacy efforts;
- Encouraging more cities to join UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities.

Dr Subbarao exhorted the participants in closing, thus: "Let us create the world we want, together!"

## **TECHNICAL SESSION III: COLLABORATION MECHANISMS**

### **Collaboration Framework of UNICEF Regional Office on SAARC Framework**

#### ***Presenter***

Ms Urmila Sarkar and Ms Leotes Lugo Helin  
UNICEF ROSA

#### ***Chair***

Ms Vibeke Jensen, Director, UNESCO Islamabad



## Objectives

- To provide information on what UNICEF ROSA can offer and mode of the support to the SAARC countries to achieve the EFA unfinished agenda and SDG 4 in line with UNICEF ROSA-SAARC Cooperation Agreement.
- To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps

**M**s Sarkar started the presentation highlighting the South Asia Regional Context:

- 1 in every 4 primary school-age child lives in South Asia
- There are 100.6 million adolescents of lower secondary school-age in South Asia; 52% of them are boys
- The region accounts for 13.3% of the total global adolescents population
- 168 million children of primary school-age live in South Asia, 52% of them are boys.

South Asia is faced with poverty, compounded by disasters and conflicts. Sociocultural practices that discriminate against girls and women are pervasive. There is generally low investments on the social sector, including education. Geographical remoteness results in lack of access to basic services for children/people in these places. Disability is another challenge.

There are glaring disparities and inequalities in South Asia. Substantial reduction in the number of out of school children in the region has been achieved since 1990, but the rate of reduction rate has slowed down since 2007. South Asia is home to four (4) of the countries with the highest gender disparity (in school enrolment) with a bias against girls globally (Afghanistan, Pakistan), and against boys (Bangladesh, Nepal).

Exclusion in education is a major issue in the region: 9.8 million children of primary school-age are out of school, 15% of whom entered school late, 28% left school, and 57% of them never entered school. South Asia has the highest attrition rate in the world. Children from rural areas and from the poorest families, particularly girls are the most left-out of school. Further, there is also a learning crisis in South Asia, e.g. only 1 in 3 children reaching Grade 4 meet



the minimum learning standard.

Taking over the presentation, Ms Helin introduced UNICEF's Strategic Plan covering 2014 to 2017 linking it to SDG 4. UNICEF ROSA and UNICEF Country Offices in South Asia have noted that to meet SDG 4 in the region, there has to be strategic shifts towards learning and social inclusion. Thus UNICEF will prioritize interventions promoting on-time enrolment and school readiness; stemming drop-out; re-enrolment of OOSC, including expanding alternative pathways to education; and measuring learning outcomes.

UNICEF identified entry points in working with countries and regional partners:

- Sector planning, Sector-wide Approaches (SWAPs), partnerships and convergence
- Building the evidence base;
- Bottlenecks/barriers analysis and high impact interventions

In acknowledging the unfinished education agenda under EFA, UNICEF identified priority areas moving forward post 2015:

### Priority area 1: Reaching OOSC, stemming drop-out

UNICEF will facilitate and support evidence generation including analysis of OOSC situation and barriers (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal; upcoming: Afghanistan, Maldives) and real time monitoring linked to attendance (India, Afghanistan).

It will also facilitate and support systems strengthening through the strengthening of monitoring systems for OOSC and children at risk children of dropping out (Maldives, Bhutan).

### Priority Area 2: Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Learning

Below are some of the entry points for interventions that will promote ECD and early learning:

- Parenting education (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka)
- Early detection and referral for children with disabilities (Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka)
- Evidence generation (India, Pakistan)
- Early Learning Development Standards and school readiness (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka)
- ECD/ECE curriculum development (Bhutan, India, Nepal)
- Teacher training (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India)
- Early grade reading (India, Nepal)
- High-level multi-sectoral ECD coordination (India, Nepal)

UNICEF has ongoing collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), UNESCO and other partners to carry out a documentation of innovative pedagogies on early learning, study on investments in ECD and innovative financing mechanisms, and review of ECD and peacebuilding work in countries.

### Priority Area 3: Learning and Child-Friendly Schools/Education (CFS/CFE)

Ensuring that all dimensions of learning is covered, UNICEF is working and will continue to work on the following areas:

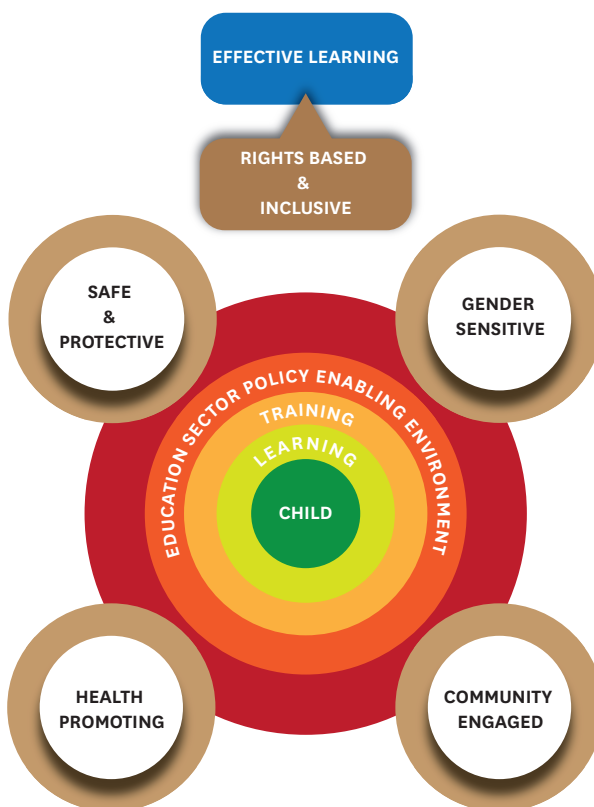
- CFS/CFE and Teacher Education Systems
- Child-centered pedagogy – ability-based learning (ABL) in India and adapted in Bangladesh as Each Child Learns initiative
- National learning assessment and utilization of data (India, Nepal)
- Life skills-based education (Bangladesh, Maldives)

### Priority area 4: Gender equality; equity cutting across the areas

Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme in all priority areas. Overall, UNICEF aims to provide an enabling environment towards a holistic education.

Special focus will be provided for education in emergencies and peacebuilding; school-based disaster risk reduction/school safety action plan; education in emergencies support; education and peacebuilding; and sport for development and peace.

#### CHILD-FRIENDLY EDUCATION SYSTEM



UNICEF is part of the following regional coordination mechanisms:

- Thematic Working Group on Education for All (with UNESCO Bangkok and UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office) which can be a regional mechanism to advance education for all within the framework of SDG 4 in Asia-Pacific
- Global Partnership for Education which covers South Asian countries except India and Sri Lanka
- UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)
- Asia-Pacific Regional Network on Early Childhood (ARNEC)
- Partnerships with the academic, private sector, civil society organizations/NGOs
- Partnerships with SAARC: UNICEF-SAARC, UNESCO-SAARC

Specific to UNICEF-SAARC Cooperation, the following are some key points:

- There is an existing SAARC-UNICEF ROSA Cooperation Agreement for 2014 to 2017.
- The first MOU between SAARC and UNICEF ROSA was signed in 1993 where UNICEF committed to support implementation of relevant SAARC decisions on children
- Cooperation Agreement for 2014-2017: SAARC, UNICEF mutually agree to cooperate to advance awareness, understanding and actions for children in South Asia through the promotion of:
  - Cooperation among Member States;
  - Interaction between Member States, civil society, academia, parliamentarians, development and humanitarian partners in the region
  - To be pursued at regional level between the SAARC Secretariat, UNICEF ROSA and the collective of Member States; at country level between Member States and UNICEF

Countries Offices within the framework of SAARC commitments

- Supporting Member States in reaching the MDGs, SDGs with particular focus on the most disadvantaged children
- Programme development including on basic education, early childhood development (ECD), child protection and child sensitive social protection with equity
- An education work plan has been prepared for 2015 as part of the agreement. UNICEF ROSA committed to organize a study visit of SAARC Directors to the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat to learn about the SEAMEO and its Centers and facilitate possible collaboration. The visit was held in May 2015.

In closing, Ms Sarkar posed questions for participants' consideration, including:

- Can countries in South Asia achieve specific SDG 4 targets earlier than 2030? e.g. universal primary completion by 2020?
- What regional mechanisms can be pursued to support countries meet the SDGs and SDG 4 in particular?
- What could be the role of SAARC? How can MOEs engage SAARC? (e.g. proposal for SAARC body on education should come from Member States)

As a way forward, UNICEF committed to work together with Countries, UNESCO, the SAARC Secretariat and other regional partners on an SDG 4 Framework for Action for South Asia. UNICEF ROSA committed to facilitate cross-country learning and inter-regional exchanges (South-South collaboration) and high-level advocacy. Likewise, UNICEF committed to support strengthened measurement and metrics linked to SDG 4, including learning assessment for South Asia. Finally, UNICEF committed to support setting up mechanisms for regional coordination including via SAARC, e.g. SAARC apex body on education.



## SAARC Framework for Action for the post 2015 Education Agenda

### *Presenter*

Prof Ramachandran, NUEPA

### *Chair*

Dr Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat,  
Bangkok



## Objectives

- To share SAARC Framework of action on key possible elements for the SAARC countries
- To get feedback on the presentation for the SAARC Framework for Action

**S**DG 4 is not merely an agenda for the poor countries of the world while MDGs, with its focus on primary and secondary level education, could have been open to that criticism. SDG 4 with its focus on lifelong learning for all including children, youth and adults from early childhood care to tertiary education and higher education has made it possible to address such a gap. The SAARC Framework for Action was discussed in October 2014 and it was recognized that there is an increasing demand of post-secondary education and higher education in SAARC countries and this has to be addressed effectively.

The broad principles underpinning the SAARC Framework for Action were:

- The urge to reform and transform education systems in the region to be able to respond to the requirements of fast changing, globalizing, and knowledge based societies and to promote their sustainable development.
- The post-2015 education agenda to address both the unfinished agenda related to the current EFA goals as well as emerging challenges for educational development in the region.
- The need to ensure equitable and inclusive access to education for all at all levels of education by expanding educational access, significantly improving the quality of education imparted, and ensuring that educational opportunities are available to all segments of the society.

The following themes were emphasized in the Framework for Action:

**ECCE:** Enhancing the learning and *development readiness* of pre-school age children for primary education through participation in quality childhood care and education with particular attention to children belonging to *disadvantaged population groups*.

**Primary Education:** Accelerating progress towards the goal of Education for All and ensuring that all primary/ elementary school-age children are enabled to realize their right to *free and compulsory education* and are supported to complete a quality primary education that is *relevant, inclusive, learner centered and gender-equitable*, with all of them achieving expected learning outcomes defined for different levels of education.

**Equity and Inclusion:** A clear focus on disadvantaged groups emerged. It was emphasized that policies and programmatic responses were required for ensuring that all education programmes are made accessible, inclusive and responsive to children and young people from disadvantaged population groups, particularly children with special needs (e.g. remote areas) and those with disabilities; ensuring that all enrolled pupils are supported to enable them to achieve the expected learning outcomes established by the countries concerned and not global benchmarks alone; ensuring that social, regional and gender gaps in education are eliminated and gender equality and women's empowerment are promoted throughout the education system; ensuring the young people in the age group 15-24 are provided opportunities to attain skills for employability; undertaking system-wide reforms required to tackle barriers preventing students from disadvantaged population groups from continuing their education and employability. Earlier, there was not such a clear focus on disadvantaged populations and this gave higher emphasis on inclusiveness.

**Secondary Education:** Recognizing the need for upward mobility, secondary education must be ensured for all. More important is the skill development, skills and competencies for life and work, including technical and vocational skills that are required for employability, work and entrepreneurship and for adapting to an ever-changing world of work. The idea was that there cannot be a prescribed curriculum for the vocational stream because job

profile changes rapidly and therefore education must help to move towards and adapt to that change.

**Higher Education:** This was not highlighted so much in SGD 4 but the SAARC countries were clear on this. The focus must be on strengthening capacity of higher education institutions in order to ensure equitable access to tertiary education; expanding the availability of higher education institutions, including technical and professional education institutions; facilitating mutual recognition of qualification and mobility of students and faculty, as well as alternative learning modes such as open and distance learning modes; narrowing group inequalities in access to higher education, and improving teaching and research across all higher education institutions. This is a SDG+ agenda with higher emphasis on higher education in SAARC countries.

**Sharing of Research Facilities:** Ensuring utilization of common advanced centralized research facilities/ services for Universities in the SAARC region and Networking with Centres of Excellence and encourage channels of communication on an on-going basis. This is also a SDG+ agenda

**Gender Equality:** Reducing and eventually eliminating gender and social category gaps and inequalities in access to education, teaching-learning process and learning outcomes by ensuring that gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment are promoted throughout the education system; and implementing system-wide initiatives that are needed to tackle the barriers that prevent students from disadvantaged population groups from continuing their education.

**Quality of Education:** Fostering quality education with a strong focus on enabling all learners attain relevant learning outcomes through reforms relating to curricula, learning materials, pedagogic processes, learning assessment frameworks, teacher quality and performance, improvement in institutional leadership and management;

**Use of ICT:** Ensuring effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for improving access to education, enhancing the quality of teaching-learning process, training of teachers, and strengthening educational planning and management. Studies all over the world are showing that ICT does not help children at the primary level learn better. ICT as a learning tool is not effective though it does motivate their curiosity but is extremely useful

at higher levels and thus teaching competence is important at the primary level.

**Teacher Development:** Ensuring that the systems of teacher preparation, and teacher management and development are reformed to ensure adequate supply of qualified and competent teachers to meet the demand of all levels/stages of the education system and that measures are put in place to institutionalize continuing professional development of serving teachers leading to professionalization and enhanced capacity of teachers; Clearly, teacher development is given high priority in the Framework.

**Institutional Management and Leadership:** Ensuring that the systems of teacher preparation, and teacher management and development are reformed to ensure adequate supply of qualified and competent teachers to meet the demand of all levels/stages of the education system and that measures are put in place to institutionalize continuing professional development of serving teachers leading to professionalization and enhanced capacity of teachers;

**Financing:** Ensuring increased and well-targeted financing of education for educational development programmes by each of the SAARC Member States.

After taking the group through the key areas of focus in the SAARC Framework for Action, Dr Ramachadran shared his thoughts that it was more comprehensive than the Incheon Declaration as it is relevant to the countries of the region. He then highlighted the issues requiring attention in the region and possible actions:

- **Addressing both access- and quality-related deficiencies in ECCE services:** One year free education should be compulsory as part of the compulsory basic education, like Bhutan seven years of pre-primary and primary education. This should be an integral part of the education system. It is composite so health, education and nutrition as a package so there is role of other ministries and department to play a role.

Quality of teaching has to be improved. Enhancing the salary of these teachers to those of the primary teachers not only enhance their status but also the fact that early childhood age is defined up to age 8 so they will also deal with Grades 1 and 2.

- **Addressing the residual access and participation gaps in primary and lower secondary:** Make education truly free, its not

the case now. Can we think on not supplying text books but provision for them through a cash transfer policy, like India is currently doing for other subsidies so that some mechanism can be found so that money reaches poor families so that they can buy textbooks, uniforms and even provide support for transport costs?

- **Reducing and eventually eliminating gender and social category gaps and inequalities in access and quality:** Focus on gender equality, not just parity, obliterating gender bias in text books, creating a gender-friendly environment, making gender a part of the teacher training programme to create a systemic change for gender equality is expected.
- **Ensuring effective teaching-learning process and achievement of expected learning outcomes:** Building a lifelong learning and literacy support system: Including mobile phones for literacy retention and use ICT platforms.

Expanding opportunities for acquiring relevant skills, technical and vocational, life skills and those that embrace diversity and working together. The skill orientation in the SAARC Framework is thus broader than merely providing vocational skills.

Fostering quality education with focus on relevant learning outcomes by enhancing teacher quality and performance as also increasing use of ICT to improve teaching-learning process, especially at lower and higher secondary levels.

Improving systems and practices for assessment of learning including evaluation of learning environment, teaching-learning processes and learning outcomes, including cognitive and non-cognitive domains.

Institutionalizing a responsive, participatory and accountable system of educational governance and management.

Ensuring increased and well targeted financing of education to reach at least 4-6% of GDP.

### Possible Joint Action by SAARC Countries<sup>5</sup>

- Expanding opportunities for skill development, including TVET
- Setting up a mechanism for developing an employment requirements-related information

system in SAARC countries and for building capacity for assessing skill requirements and designing TVET programmes to respond to the changing job trades/profiles, employment opportunities and knowledge economy.

- Developing a mechanism to support the implementation of National Skills Qualification Framework and quality assurance systems to facilitate effective implementation of skill development programmes.
- Documentation and dissemination of experiences relating to collaboration and partnership with industry for designing TVET programmes that are in tune with the changing job profiles and labour market needs.

### Use of ICT for expanding educational access and quality

- Identifying institutions within each country to form an institutional network to formulate strategies for integration of ICT in education, including cloud computing applications, MOOC etc., for expanding educational access, improving teaching-learning process, and educational planning and management;
- Creating institutional network for sharing ICT policies and Open Educational Resources for making digital content accessible and affordable to learners; Creating a shared agenda for Open Education Resources (OER) among SAARC countries; Opening up India's National Repository for use by SAARC countries; and expanding the collection that is available in National Repository to cover teacher education, and vocational education;
- Setting up of an observatory of technology in order to identify specific technology devices and applications relevant to individual countries and creating a portal to share these technology examples;
- Sharing information relating to practices/innovations relating to ICT policies and Open Educational Resources etc.; Compile and share findings of studies/research/evaluation on the impact of the use of ICT in education.
- Organizing annual Regional Symposium on technology-enabled learning and study visits to observe best practices.

<sup>5</sup> Some slides were not presented.

### **Identifying processes/activities such as regional consultations for the formulation of indicators for monitoring progress towards post-2015 education development goals**

- Formulating mechanism for monitoring progress towards post-2015 education development goals in SAARC countries;
- Determining the frequency of monitoring reports and setting up a team for preparation and dissemination of the reports;
- Identifying processes/activities such as regional

workshops for strengthening technical capacities within each country for monitoring progress towards post-2015 education development goals/targets.

The presentation laid out some of the ideas as an indicative framework for action towards an effective collaboration that can be made for systematic approach to address issues around educations faced by the SAARC region. These may be used to deliberate on and inform the Delhi Declaration to be adopted at the end of this Conference. Clearly, the framework will focus on the SDGs and highlight the priorities of action.

**TECHNICAL SESSION IV:  
EDUCATION 2030 AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS  
SECOND DAY: 14 OCTOBER 2015 (WEDNESDAY)**

**Collaboration framework of Mahatma Gandhi Institute  
of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development**

***Presenter:***

Ms Mathangi Subramanian, Project Officer, MGIEP

***Chair:***

Mr Paolo Fontani, Director, UNESCO Kabul office



## Objectives

- To share the present work of MGIEP to SAARC member states
- To provide information on what MGIEP can offer and mode of the support to the SAARC countries to achieve SDG Goal 4 in line with UNESCO-SAARC MOU, especially on SDG Target 4.7
- To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps

Recognizing the achievement in lower education, the immediate mission goal for education is for higher education outcome. World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and other agencies show the growth in education not only in increasing the enrolment rate but in the creation of schools that facilitate gender equality and sustainable development. Along the same line, the work on education being done at UNESCO MGIEP provide inputs for changes towards sustainable development. UNESCO MGIEP has been working towards peace recognition as well as education for sustainable growth in the Asia-Pacific Region.

MGIEP will pursue Target 4.7 of SDG 4, thus:

*By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of cultures contribution to sustainable development. (UNESCO 2015 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>).*

**Ms Subramaniam** noted the benefits of Target 4.7 by referring to earlier studies and experiences, viz:

Bajaj (2010) shows the positive impact of human rights education on teacher quality, governance, community involvement

Students who experience violence in school (such as bullying) develop PTSD and start having attendance and other issues that make it difficult to learn

World Bank and UNICEF have both shown high returns on investment for girls' education and, by extension, the promotion of gender equity.



In light of Target 4.7, UNESCO MGIEP is conducting a scoping exercise on existing curriculum efforts to understand how and where this education is taking place (formal v. non-formal v. informal, separate classes or embedded in curriculum). The emphasis is on embedding peace, sustainability and global citizenship in core subjects, e.g., science, math (or STEM) and languages, which are often invoked in national education reforms to ensure national supremacy and economic growth. This project is tentatively scheduled for completion in late 2016 or early 2017.

UNESCO MGIEP work on ICT in Education which has generated a lot of positive response through -

- Transformative Learning Labs (TLL) Programme which combines project-based, thematic, and peer-to-peer approaches to learning where students engage in collaborative projects with their peers from other schools through a digital platform. Participants from both Hindi-medium and English-medium schools of instruction from different localities, and government as well

as private schools are equally involved in this programme which amounts to an inter-cultural (digital) exchange. Even participants who did not have any access to technology before are doing exceptionally well in this programme.

- Video Game Challenge where professionals worldwide create videos which will educate about peace, values and development to the children in schools. The video games refer to peace and sustainability-related issue, and thus contribute actively to the growing ecosystem of games for change. The programme is at its final stage and will be implemented in schools as soon as the videos are completed.
- IWR Simulation Game where digital simulation game with high-end graphics will be used to help undergraduate students in economics and sustainability studies to understand the principles and implications of the Inclusive Wealth Index.

ICT will definitely improve the quality of education and facilitate new insights and ideas into the education system. But, how can 6 % of the GDP be channeled in the education sector? Bigger investments are needed for successful interventions. The economists and the policy makers must come together to formulate policies so as to provide the necessary budgets and funds for the education sector.

MGIEP also has expertise in research, monitoring and assessment. A youth policy consultation across India was undertaken where people gave feedback about their education and how the policies on education should be formulated to be more responsive. This initiative may be replicated in other countries.

MGIEP will facilitate a session at the Youth Forum of UNESCO General Conference, building capacity

among youth on the development and use of M&E instruments. Brainstorming about the use of crowdsourcing devices and technologies to increase reach of monitoring is also being done.

MGIEP is working on Target 4.7 thematic outcomes, thus:

- Fostering conversation with academic community about restructuring indicators to meet these challenges
- Working paper on YOUthSpeak survey discussing challenges of monitoring (stated vs. revealed preferences)
- Working paper on defining (and critiquing) concepts of global citizenship
- Proposed panel at Comparative International Education Society (CIES) conference in 2016 to bring academics into the conversation

Towards the achievement of SDGs, MGIEP will -

- Work closely with countries undergoing a curricular review/revision process
- Provide support to countries interested in ICT and education
- Provide research and assessment support
- Work with countries interested in participating in youth-led monitoring and assessment at any levels.



## **Institutional Arrangements to Enhance Regional Cooperation: An Example of SEAMEO and Best Practices for SAARC Countries.**

### ***Presenter:***

Dr Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat

### ***Chair:***

Mr Kiichi Oyasu, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Dhaka office



## Objective: To share the SEAMEO experience on

- Main mandates including main area of work
- Working modality with the countries
- Financial and institutional arrangements
- Lessons learned and challenges
- Message for SAARC secretariat and countries
- Possible next steps to establish a mechanism like SEAMEO in SAARC
- To share the best practices in SAARC countries to enhance regional cooperation

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization or SEAMEO was established on November 30, 1965 in Bangkok. In 1968, the official charter was signed by the Ministers of Education from Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. It has 11 Member-States, namely: Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and Timor Leste. It has 8 Associate Members, namely: Spain, UK, Australia, France, New Zealand, Netherlands, Canada, and Germany. Further, SEAMEO has, to date, the following Affiliate Members: 1999 - International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), 2009 - The University of Tsukuba, 2010 - The British Council, 2015 - the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE).

SEAMEO’s vision is to be the leading organization for enhancing regional understanding and cooperation in education, science and culture for a better quality of

life in Southeast Asia. For which, it’s of main areas of work are as follows:

### Education

21st Century Skills  
 Continuous Professional Development for Teachers and Education Personnel  
 Education for All  
 Education for Sustainable Development  
 Higher Education  
 Technical and Vocational Education

### Science

Agriculture  
 Biodiversity and Biotechnology  
 Disaster Management  
 Food and Nutrition  
 Natural Resources and Environmental Management  
 Preventive Health, Reproductive Health Education and Life Skills Development

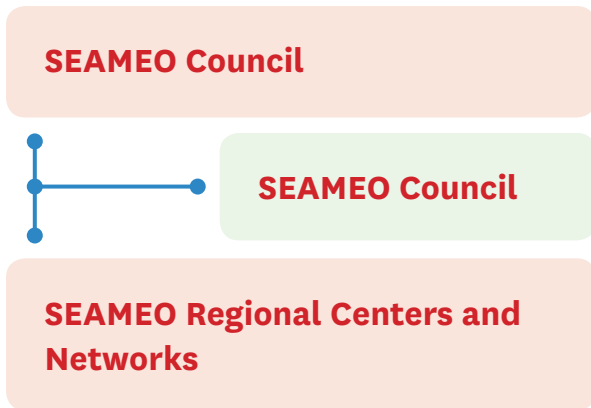
### Culture

Archaeology and History  
 Arts and Design  
 Cultural Diversity and Regional Identity  
 Heritage Preservation and Cultural Management  
 Traditions and Values

SEAMEO has core competencies in 1) technical and scientific expertise in areas of specialization, 2) governance and management skills, 3) collaborative partnerships and networking skills, and 4) research, creativity and innovation skills. Its core values relate to



attitude (respect for cultural diversity, belief in people, commitment), behaviour (striving for excellence, to be proactive, to be service-oriented) and character (integrity, professionalism, collaboratism). Organizationally, SEAMEO is structured as follows:



The SEAMEO Council is composed of Ministers of Education from SEA countries who makes policies and decisions for the organization. The SEAMEO Secretariat is the executive arm of the SEAMEO Council and the Headquarters of the Organization; it implements policies and executes programmes adopted by the Council. While headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand, SEAMEO has 12 SEAMEO Regional Centres that Focus on Development, 6 SEAMEO Regional Centres and Networks that focus on Science and 2 SEAMEO Regional Centres that focus on Culture in different countries in Southeast Asia region and the Mekong sub region.

From 1965 to 2015, SEAMEO has worked closely with Government, and national, regional and international bodies, supporting in the implementation and achievement of international commitments towards sustainable development, especially in Southeast Asia. For two decades, SEAMEO’s focus (on education) was on the global flagship agenda “Education for All”.

On its 50th year, SEAMEO has identified 7 priorities in line with post-2015 development agenda, thus:

- **Early Childhood Care and Education:**  
The ultimate goal is to achieve universal pre-primary education by 2030, including to those disadvantaged groups who can benefit most such as the poor, the rural, the marginalized, and the disabled.
- **Addressing Barriers to Inclusion**  
Through the development of innovations in

delivery and management, previously inaccessible groups might benefit from basic learning opportunities and by targeting sectors of the vulnerable, barriers of exclusion can be dissolved.

- **Resiliency in the Face of Emergencies (e.g. conflicts, extreme weather and natural disasters)**  
To prepare schools leaders, teachers and students as well as local communities in managing and maintaining the delivery of education services.
  - **Promoting Technical and Vocational Education and Training**  
By engaging both students and parents with more visible investment and a curricula that focuses on creativity and innovation, technical and vocational education and training can become a pivotal tool in higher education and regional labor, skill and learner mobility.
  - **Teacher Education**  
Key is making teaching a profession of first choice through the comprehensive, strategic, and practice-based reform of the teacher management and development systems. Important to this is that policies should consciously emphasize the requirement of having the best candidates for teacher training.
  - **Harmonization in Higher Education and Research**  
This should take place at the institutional level rather than at the governmental level, with each one determining its most important needs to be able to co-ordinate and set standards with other institutions.
  - **Adopting a 21st Century Curriculum**  
Radical reform should be pursued through a systematic analysis of the knowledge, skills, and values that will be needed to effectively respond to the changing global context, and more particularly, to the ever-increasing complexity of the Southeast Asian economic, socio-cultural, and political environment.
- SEAMEO’s Framework for Reaching the Unreached consists of 10 Projects, each spearheaded by a Member-State, thus:
- Transition support for learners with disabilities (led by Malaysia)

- Tracking system for students at risk of dropping out (led by Philippines)
- Coherence to promote awareness of education for girls and women (led by Malaysia)
- Tracking mechanism for unreached population (led by Vietnam)
- Pre-school programme for all (led by Brunei)
- Multi-grade teaching (led by Lao PDR)
- Development of more community-based learning centres in rural areas in SEA for Literacy and Livelihoods (led by Thailand)
- Inter-country programme for stateless and undocumented children (led by Indonesia)
- Project on HIV-AIDS using an integrated approach (coordination between governments) (led by Thailand)
- Education in emergencies and disaster preparedness (led by Indonesia)

SEAMEO prioritizes collaboration, both internationally and within Southeast Asia. SEAMEO would be honoured to assist SAARC in any way that it can, not only through open communication but also by directly welcoming representatives of the SAARC Secretariat and SAARC countries to attend SEAMEO meetings as observers and view the SEAMEO centres first hand.

## **TECHNICAL SESSION V MONITORING/EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION**

**Proposed indicators for Sustainable Development Goal  
(SDG) 4 by ETAG and Relevancy to SAARC Context**

***Presenter***

Mr Shailendra Sigdel, Statistical Advisor for South Asia

***Chair***

Ms Urmila Sarkar, Regional Advisor - Education, UNICEF  
ROSA



## Objective

- To present proposed indicators for SDG 4 proposed by TAG
- To discuss the availability, frequency, and relevance of the proposed indicators for the SAARC region

**M**r Sigdel highlighted the journey so far of the SDGs since its launch at the end of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) in June 2012.

SDG 4 has a full range of lifelong learning: early childhood, primary, secondary, TVET, tertiary, skills for work, literacy and numeracy (4.1-4.4, 4.6), 1 target on knowledge and skills for sustainable development (4.7), 1 target on equity (4.5) and 3 targets on means of implementation: school environment, scholarships and teachers (4.a-4.c).

Monitoring of the SDGs is a serious challenge given its scope. The post-2015 agenda is faced with the complexities of the “big data era” where there is too much information, but information may be of bad quality, or dispersed; data may be inconsistent or uninterpreted or unused. Furthermore, while measuring complex competencies, there is the tendency to standardize it to help appreciate data across contexts.

There are proposed levels of monitoring<sup>6</sup>:

- **National:** must link to national plan; consult national stakeholders; recognize context and address inclusion and broader learning goals;
- **Regional:** must include indicators to monitor frameworks validated by regional groupings (AU Education Decades, EU2020);
- **Thematic:** must provide a broader set of indicators to covers the range of sectoral priorities (42 indicators);
- **Global:** must be a focused set of globally comparable indicators based on clear criteria (10-15 indicators).

The selection of SDG indicators is country-led, drawing from inputs across sources such as:

- **UN Member States:** UN Statistical Commission,



Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators

- **Regional bodies:** AU, EU, OECD, UN Regional Commissions
- **International bodies:** UN and other intergovernmental organizations
- **Technical experts and academia:** Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- NGOs, civil society and others
- **Global education community:** Technical Advisory Group on Post-2015 Education Indicators

The criteria for selecting global and thematic indicators are:

- **Relevance:** Indicators should reflect the key policy themes in each target
- **Alignment:** The item to be measured should be valid and meaningful across all countries
- **Feasibility:** Data should be collected regularly and available for most countries
- **Communicability:** Indicators must be easily understood

<sup>6</sup> from UNSG Synthesis Report, December 2014

The proposed global indicators for education are as follows:

- 4.1 Reading and mathematics learning outcomes
- 4.2 % of under 5s who are developmentally ‘on track’
- 4.3 Participation rate of adults in formal and non-formal education and technical and vocational training
- 4.4 % of youth/adults with ICT skills
- 4.5 Parity indices - Sex, Urban/ Rural, wealth quintile (for all indicators that can be disaggregated)
- 4.6 Proficiency of youth/adults in literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 % of 15-year old proficient in environmental, geoscience, global citizenship, non-violence, etc.
- 4.a % of schools with access to basic services and facilities
- 4.b ODA expenditure on scholarships
- 4.c % of trained teachers

There are 43 proposed thematic indicators (including the proposed global indicators), which go beyond the measurement of outcomes to include indicators on the provision of, access to, participation in and completion of education, and on education policies. Mr Sigdel discussed examples of indicators for measuring various dimensions of education. Likewise, he discussed sources of information for the purpose of monitoring. He also explained the process of and timeline for putting together the global indicators.

To be able to deal with the challenges of monitoring the SDGs, new methodologies and new surveys to capture all the data needed must be developed. There must be a demand for ‘real-time’ data to inform policy decisions, and more diverse sources of data. Capacities for data analysis and use must be strengthened.

Before this Conference, UIS sent out forms to MOEs in SAARC countries to get a sense of indicator availability in each country. This was done in consideration of the need to identify specific targets for the region and specific countries for EFA unfinished agenda and SDG 4. The scope covered emerging issues related to education agenda - quality primary and lower secondary education, literacy, OOSC and expenditure. Countries were asked to use disaggregated data by sex, location, wealth, etc. and to identify targeted interventions as relevant. Countries were asked to undertake Indicator Mapping. Only two (2) countries

- and 1 more lately which couldn’t be included in the tabulation - managed to revert with information. Analyzing the responses, Mr Sigdel presented the tabulated results to provide a glimpse of the situation in the region, thus:

#### INDICATOR AVAILABILITY IN SAARC COUNTRIES

Indicators	# of Yes (countries)	# of No (countries)	No Responses (countries)
Percentage of child men who achieve minimum proficiency standards in reading/ mathematics at end of primary school	2	1	0
Percentage of child men who achieve minimum proficiency standards in reading/ mathematics at end of lower secondary school	2	1	0
Have your country organized a nationally-representative learning assessment at the end of primary school during the last 3 years	2		1
Have your country organized a nationally-representative learning assessment at the end of lower secondary school during the last 3 years	1		2
Gross intake ratio to last grade in primary education	1		2
Gross intake ratio to the last grade in lower secondary education	1		2
Completion rate of primary education	1		2
Completion rate of lower secondary education	1		2
Completion rate of upper secondary education	1		2
Out-of-school rate of primary school age		1	2
Out-of school rate of lower secondary school age		1	2

Clearly, there is an urgent need in the SAARC region to work hard on data collection and on effectively using data. Mr Sigdel highlighted the need to transform data into knowledge, e.g. national agencies need to provide data to users (policy makers, schools, media,

parents); engage countries in the use of data in policy and practice; train national offices to understand new data needs and reporting; and emphasize the need to integrate systems and to use them.

The need for leadership and investment cannot be ignored, e.g. deciding which indicators to build requires leadership and clear mandate must be given to those who will develop the indicators. There must also be leadership in convening stakeholders, gaining consensus and in testing indicators in coordinated way. Targets must be measurable.

Likewise, investments in data collection are needed. National administrative data systems must be well-functioning. Household surveys must be coordinated and expanded, with emphasis on reaching the most disadvantaged communities. There must be investment to enhance use of proper methodologies and use of statistics. The regular assessment of students must be enhanced. Finally, it must be recognized that the matter of statistical capacity building is a huge task in SAARC countries.

It is essential to take note of the timeline for the development of indicators for SDGs in order for the

countries to undertake what is necessary at the national level and to have a meaningful participation in the regional/thematic/global processes.

**October 2015**

Second meeting of IAEG-SDGs (26-28 October)

**November 2015**

Education 2030 Framework for Action and thematic indicators adopted by Ministers of Education (4 November)

IAEG-SDGs final proposal submitted to UN Statistical Commission (30 November)

**March 2016**

UN Statistical Commission reviews and endorses IAEG-SDGs global indicator framework

**July 2016**

ECOSOC adopts global indicator framework

**September 2016**

UN General Assembly adopts global indicator framework



**Regional Coordination/Monitoring Mechanism to  
Complete EFA Unfinished Business and in Attaining  
SDG 4 Goals**

***Presenter***

Mr Gwang-Jo Kim, Director, UNESCO Bangkok office

***Chair***

Ms Vibeke Jensen, Director, UNESCO Islamabad office



## Objective

To present the existing and new possible mechanism / platform or restructuring of existing mechanism to complete the EFA unfinished businesses and attain SDG 4 in SAARC countries.

Acknowledging the partnership between UNESCO and UNICEF, and all other UN agencies, Mr Kim stressed how these organizations have been working together in providing Education for All in the Asia-Pacific region. He informed the participants about the mandate given to UNESCO and UNICEF in 2011 to initiate and lead the deliberations with Member-States on the post-2015 Education Agenda at the global level. With 48 countries as members, discussions focus on education alongside other development goals towards sustainable development. In the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Korea, there were deliberations on EFA unfinished agenda and post-2015 agenda.

Mr Kim spoke of the coordination mechanisms in Asia Pacific for EFA and the need for new mechanisms for SDG 4. Accordingly, he divided his presentation into two (2) parts, highlighting the importance of drawing lessons from the experience of EFA to come up with better mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda.

### Part 1. Coordination mechanisms in Asia-Pacific/TWG on EFA

Mr Kim, through the diagram below, explained the structures and processes for coordinating the implementation and monitoring progress on EFA.

Goal of the TWG on EFA is to support the achievement of the EFA goals in UN Member States throughout the region by 2015. UNESCO (Secretariat) and UNICEF Co-Chair the TWG and the following comprise its membership:

#### UN agencies

ILO, FAO, IOM, UNESCAP, etc.

#### CSOs

Asia South Pacific Association for Basic Education (ASPBAE); Plan International; ActionAid; Leonard Cheshire Disability, Aide et Action; ATD Fourth World, etc.



#### Sub-regional bodies

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)

#### Network:

Asia-Pacific Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)

#### EFA Flagship

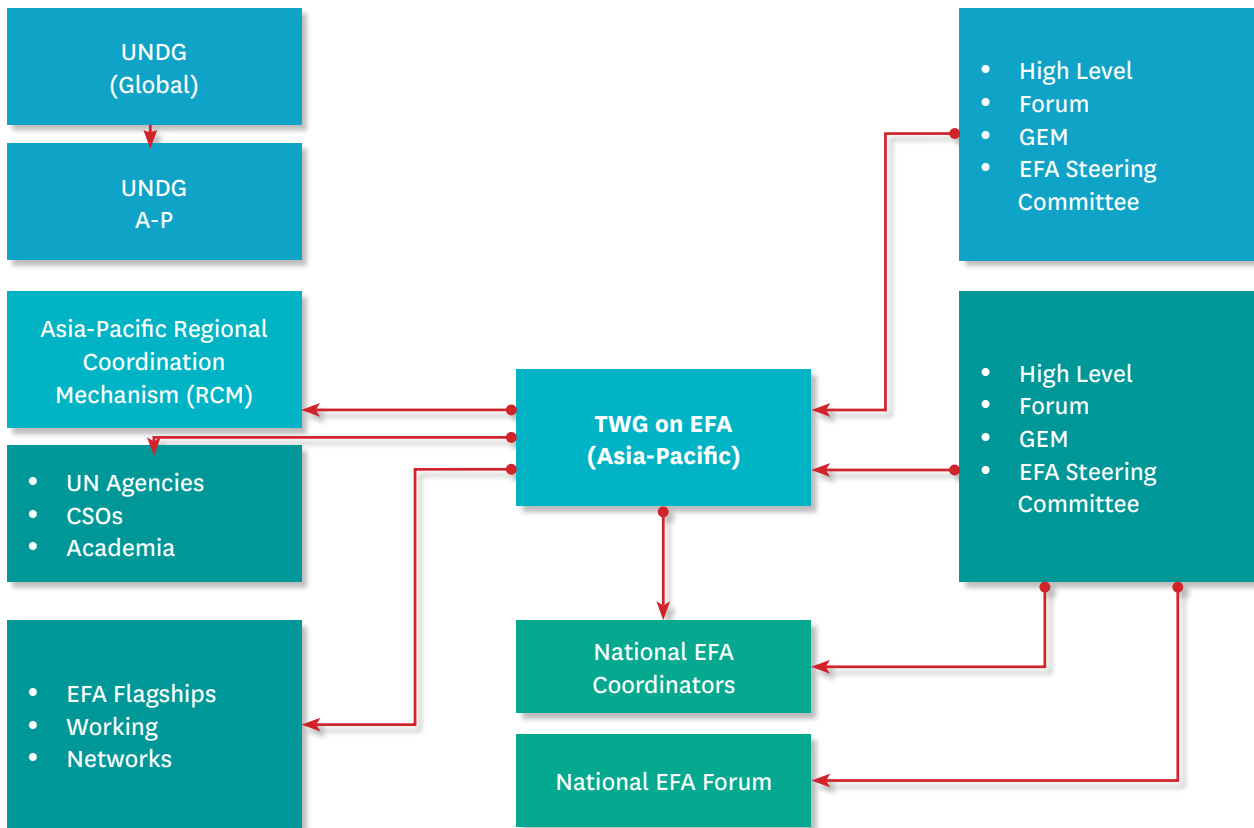
UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

#### Working Group:

Multilingual Education Working Group (MLE-WG)

The functions of the TWG on EFA consisted of the following, thus:

- Information sharing
- Establishing priority areas for cooperation and potential joint programme responses
- Dissemination of innovative/good practices and lessons
- Others (assist individual countries and their national EFA Forums/Task Forces to implement, monitor, assess, allocate resources, and report on the status of actualizing the National EFA Action Plans)



Work on information-sharing and other initiatives are not only concentrated in developing countries but also in advanced countries such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, etc. The examples of countries such as Singapore or Japan on how they have achieved Education for All may be replicated in under-developed and developing countries. The education policy that has worked elsewhere in the world may not be successful in the Asia-Pacific region but context-specific policy will be most effective. The bigger concern would be that there are different policies required for different stages in education and all these policies need to be coordinated accordingly. At the national level, there should be commonality of education agenda among different ministries to avoid confusion. In terms of assessment and monitoring, UNESCO and UNICEF have been working with UIS to facilitate proper data for research and analysis.

Some of the key achievements of the TWG on EFA are -

- Monitoring of EFA/technical support: Mid-Decade Assessment of EFA (2007-8); National EFA 2015 Reviews (2013-4)
- Joint advocacy: Launches of Global Monitoring Reports, International UN Days, videos on gender equality in education and EFA, joint statements,

infographics and other advocacy materials.

- Publications to inform policymaking: Regional Synthesis of EFA in Asia-Pacific; Asia-Pacific End-of-Decade Notes in EFA

Additionally, there is the Global and Regional Assessments of the EFA Architecture where TWG on EFA members have been and will be interviewed.

There is no doubt that the TWG on EFA is a unique and only functioning regional cooperation in education that brings together UN agencies, CSOs and academia. It is a spontaneous process built on volunteerism. However, it has some limitations, to wit:

- limited scope with focus on EFA, in particular primary education
- Support to countries is inadequate
- Need to streamline and align the work of all member agencies with the new agenda, Education 2030
- Need for a broader concept of partnership
- Requires results orientation and accountability mechanisms

## Part 2. Developing a new and dynamic coordination mechanism for SDG 4

**Mr Kim presented ideas on a new coordination mechanism for SDG 4, thus:**

- Government-led process;
- Stronger leadership and ownership at the national level;
- Coordination and synergy within and between governments on education development and its integration into wider socio-economic development frameworks;
- Cooperation between the convening agencies, regional and intergovernmental organizations, and regional and sub-regional communities
- Establishing and strengthening mechanisms for regional and global monitoring processes.

A comprehensive mechanism is needed to implement the unfulfilled agenda of EFA by 2030. The TWG for EFA was designed to be at the centre of the coordination process for EFA but it was loosely structured. For the purpose of the Education 2030 Agenda, something more thought-out is required. There is a possibility of collaboration between SAARC and SEMEAO for better development of higher education. However, the coordination and synergy at the national level must be strengthened first before the regional level mechanisms. The leadership of the country plays a pivotal role; there should be consistency between the government policies on education development and the wider socio-economic development framework.

An Assessment of the EFA Architecture in Asia-Pacific has been commissioned to help put together a responsive mechanism in place for the new education agenda. The objectives of the assessment are:

- To assess the relevance and effectiveness of the Asia-Pacific EFA architecture at the regional and national levels
- To develop guidelines for improving national coordination mechanisms in the context of the new education agenda
- To provide a broad framework for improved coordination and cooperation among regional education partners within the context of the post-2015 education agenda, in support of regional, sub-regional and national education efforts to carry out joint advocacy, monitoring and reporting from 2015 onwards.

Key questions being asked are:

- How effective have existing EFA co-ordination mechanisms been in terms of their contribution towards the achievement of the EFA goals in Asia-Pacific?
- What mechanisms and processes should we establish in the context of new agenda?

For the next steps, there will be a TWG meeting to inform the TWG on EFA and other education coordination mechanisms in Asia-Pacific in the context of Education 2030. A presentation on a new coordination mechanism shall be presented at the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED) on November 25-27, 2015 in Bangkok.

## Concluding Session

A Way Forward

### AN ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION WITH NEXT STEPS

#### *Chair*

Ms Rina Ray, Additional Secretary Department of  
Secondary Education, Government of India

Dr Subash Chandra Khuntia, Secretary, School Education  
and Literacy, MHRD, Government of India



## Objective

- To discuss and adopt the New Delhi Agreement
- Plenary Discussion by SAARC Countries with UNICEF and UNESCO and all participants.

With inputs from the Drafting Committee, UNICEF and UNESCO helped prepare the draft Outcome Document which was presented for comments and deliberations by all participants. Further inputs were incorporated to finalize the Outcome Document.

The Outcome Document is presented at the start of this report.

**Mr Kunthia** reiterated that education was a transformative idea captured in the SDG 4 goal that would help achieve all other SDG goals. Education underpinned all other goals; it is an agenda for the success of initiatives like the reduction of poverty, promotion of health and nutrition, achievement of gender equality, etc. From unfinished EFA agenda to some unfinished targets of MDGs, now we have to go through the new goals of SDG.



SAARC countries have many common characteristics not only in terms of geography, but language, culture, societal norms, and ways of doing things. Therefore, it would be possible to find a common method of working together to make the SDGs successful. Some of the countries have really performed really well. Sri Lanka's model of education has been very successful. In Sri Lanka, human development and economic

development have correspondingly taken place. In India, the state of Kerala, is also an example of such development, generally referred to as 'Kerala model of development'.

Economic development takes time to achieve and all countries are working towards it to be like the developed countries. The potential of the young people, and other resources must be harnessed. South Asia should not wait for a trickle-down development to happen; human development cannot take place without countries working for it.

A large number of out-of-school children are in South Asia. All countries have one common problem: how to keep children in school. The retention of the students in school has to be done through quality improvement of the education system. There are many successful methods to do that, one of them is joyful learning for children.

Mr Kunthia shared that today, he attended a programme organized by a foundation on migrant children, whose parents move from one locality to another for seasonal work. In such a situation, how can children continue their education? Many innovative methods are being employed to respond to this need. If similar methods of learning are applied to non-migrant children, he is definite that the quality of education will improve.

Adult literacy of working population must be given attention and functional literacy provided. These are some areas where South Asia has to focus on. Countries with small population do very intensive work and several goals can be completed in quick time. And they can provide a kind of guideline for the other countries to follow. What can be done in smaller areas in big countries? Big countries are made up of smaller parts so, similar strategies may be adopted.

Mr Kunthia conveyed his happiness that UNICEF and UNESCO are collaborating on the Education Agenda

2030. He is convinced that everyone can learn from each other. He underlined that working in isolation is not going to be successful, albeit working together will not only facilitate learning but also motivation.

He congratulated the team who had now finalized the New Delhi Agreement. He suggested for South Asia to have regional centres along certain themes, which would also require the development of these themes. There should be more frequent meetings, interactions can also be through online methods.

By observing how trends are moving year to year in each country, confidence of countries in the region will grow. It has been a good beginning, and this beginning must be “exploited”. Countries can enrich each other by visiting and seeing the various activities at the national-level. India is happy to welcome all SAARC countries for regular talks to achieve the Education Agenda.

Mr Kunthia specially thanked UNESCO, particularly Mr Aoyagi, for initiating this kind of event. He thanked Mr Kim, officers from UIS, officers from UNICEF and Teams from different countries. He extended all assistance from the MHRD, GOI for future collaborations and activities. He wished for a successful fulfillment of SDGs by the SAARC nations and the involvement of the SAARC Secretariat in this regard.

**Mr Aoyagi** thanked Mr Kunthia at this point for all his encouragement and for his endorsement of the New Delhi Agreement.

## Way forward & Vote of Thanks

### **Presenter**

#### **Ms Urmila Sarkar**

Regional Advisor - Education

UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)

As a co-organizer of this first Sub-regional Conference on EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Agendas in SAARC Countries, Ms Urmila Sarkar expressed her enthusiasm that South Asia is discussing SDG 4 and the unfinished business of EFA. She conveyed her optimism that the region could achieve the post-2015 agenda, acknowledging the discussions over the last two days. She also highlighted that South Asia has so much to do to eradicate child labour, child marriage, among others, which are linked to achieving SDG 4 in the region. Education is important to improve the overall human development in the region.

Ms Sarkar noted that countries, SAARC, UN agencies and other development partners need to work together to develop a SAARC Framework of Action on Education 2030. The next SAARC Education Technical Meeting can be a platform to discuss the framework with the outcome document from this conference as a guiding document. National priorities must also be identified as well as recognition of the EFA unfinished agendas. Indicators for SDG 4 must be monitored, especially in areas where priorities have been identified including literacy, child education, secondary education, etc.

Ms Sarkar acknowledged SEAMEO’s presence and inputs into the discussions. She highlighted the importance of regional initiatives and the need to link them with national processes and mechanisms, especially in terms of monitoring and knowledge management.

The Meeting in Bangkok on SDG 4 in November 2015 is also an important platform to take the South Asia discussions forward. She also said that UNICEF would be happy to provide whatever support the countries would need.

She thanked all the participating countries for their active participation and hard work at the country-level for the implementation of the EFA goals, bestowing best wishes for ongoing efforts to meet the unfinished EFA agenda. She also extended her thanks to the host country, India.

She thanked UNESCO New Delhi, particularly Mr Aoyagi, and Mr Kim and Mr Min from the UNESCO Bangkok Office, and said that it is always great to collaborate with UNESCO. She thanked Shailendra and Girish for all the work in organizing the Conference. She thanked Ms Leotes Helin and all colleagues in UNICEF ROSA for supporting her and also UNICEF Delhi. She stated that UNICEF will work with UNESCO and other partners to take forward the work on the Education Agenda and facilitate the achievement of SDG 4.

## Closing Remarks

**Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and UNESCO Representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka, UNESCO New Delhi office**

Mr Aoyagi mentioned that UNESCO started the discussion on the FFA last year. He met the South Asia representatives in Incheon earlier this year to start

discussion, although informally, on SAARC Framework for Action.

He said that the SAARC Framework for Action must be drafted and submitted in the meeting in Paris in November 2015. UNESCO & UNICEF will be happy to help draft the document. He asked the participants if they trust and would allow UNESCO and UNICEF to do this, to which the participants said yes.

Mr Aoyagi said that the SDGs are different than the MDGs in the sense that “we are ready to implement them just after adoption”. In fact, this sub-regional meeting on SDG 4 is the first of the initiatives on SDGs in the region.

He thanked all the participants from the SAARC countries, from UNICEF and from UNESCO.



## **ANNEXURES**

### **Annex I**

List of Participants

### **Annex II**

Concept Note and Conference Annotated Programme

## Annex I: List of Participants

**Sub-Regional Conference on  
EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Agendas in SAARC Countries  
13-14 October 2015  
New Delhi, India**

Sl.	Country	Departments	Name of the Participant	Designation
1	Bangladesh	MOE	Chowdhury Mufad Ahmed	Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education
2	Bangladesh	MOE	Dr Md. Abu Hena Mostofa Kamal	Additional Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
3	Bangladesh	MOE	Ms Farhana Yasmin Jahan	Assistant Secretary (Assistant Professor), Ministry of Education
4	Bhutan	MOE	Mr Tshewang Tandin	Director General, Department of Higher and Adult Education
5	Bhutan	MOE	Mr Phuntsho Wangdi	Dept. of School Education
6	India	MOE	Dr Subash Chandra Khuntia	Secretary, Dept. of School Education and Literacy
7	India	MOE	Ms Rina Ray	Additional Secretary, Department of School Education, MHRD
8	India	MOE	Mr Rakesh Ranjan	Joint Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, MHRD
9	India	MOE	Mr Alok Mishra	Director, MHRD
10	India	MOE	Prof K. Ramachandran	Advisor, NUEPA
11	India	MOE	Ms Sunisha Ahuja	Chief Consultant, SSA
12	India	MOE	Mr Ravi Rajendra	Assistant Secretary, MHRD
13	India	MOE	Mr Trilok Sharma	MHRD
14	India	MOE	Mr Kuldeep Rai	MHRD
15	India	MOE	Mr Maneesh Garg	Joint Secretary, MHRD
16	India	MOE	Mr N. K. Sahu	Econ. Advisor, MHRD
17	Maldives	MOE	Dr.Abdul Muhsin Mohamed	Permanent Secretary , Ministry of Education
18	Maldives	MOE	Ms.Fathimath Azza	Director General / EFA Coordinator, Ministry of Education
19	Maldives	MOE	Ms Mariyam Khaleela	Educational Planner, Ministry of Education

Sl.	Country	Departments	Name of the Participant	Designation
20	Nepal	MOE	Mr Rameshwor PD Lamichhane	Under Secretary, Ministry of Education
21	Nepal	MOE	Dr Kamleshwar Kumar Sinha	Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Education
22	Nepal	MOE	Mr Radha Krishna Ghimire	Under Secretary, Ministry of Education
23	Srilanka	MOE	Dr (Mrs). M.M. Wehella	Director of Education (Policy & Planning)
24	Srilanka	MOE	Mrs B.P. Withanage	Director (Education for All)
25	Srilanka	MOE	Mrs Lalani Wijesekara	Director (Monitoring and Planning)
26	Thailand	SEAMEO Secretariat	Dr Gatot Hari Priowirjanto	Director, SEAMEO Secretariat
27	Afghanistan	UNESCO	Mr Paolo Fontani	Director, UNESCO, Kabul
28	Bangladesh	UNESCO	Mr Kiichi Oyasu	Head of Education Unit, UNESCO Dhaka
29	Thailand	UNESCO	Mr Gwang-Jo Kim	Director, UNESCO Bangkok
30	Thailand	UNESCO	Mr Min Bista Bahadur	Chief, A.I., APPEAL and EPR, UNESCO Bangkok
31	Pakistan	UNESCO	Ms Vibeke Jensen	Director, UNESCO Pakistan
32	Pakistan	UNESCO	Mr Zafar Hayat Malik	National Programme Officer, UNESCO Islamabad
33	Germany	UNESCO	Mr V. S. Ilapavuluri	Chief Programme Coordinator, UIL
34	Canada	UNESCO	Mr Said Ould Ahmedou Voffal	Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
35	Thailand	UNESCO	Ms Criana Connal	Consultant, UNESCO Bangkok
36	Nepal	UNICEF	Ms Urmila Sarkar	Chief of Education, UNICEF ROSA
37	Nepal	UNICEF	Ms Leotes Lugo Helin	Education Specialist, UNICEF ROSA
38	India	UNESCO	Mr Shigeru Aoyagi	Director, UNESCO New Delhi Office
39	India	UNESCO	Mr Alisher Umarov	Chief of Education Sector, UNESCO New Delhi
40	India	UNESCO	Mr Shailendra Sigdel	Regional Statistical Advisor, UIS
41	India	UNESCO	Ms Huma Masood	National Programme Officer, Education Sector
42	India	UNESCO	Mr Girish Joshi	Programme Assistant, Education Sector
43	India	UNESCO	Ms Sarita Jadav	National Programme Officer, Education Sector

Sl.	Country	Departments	Name of the Participant	Designation
44	India	UNESCO	Ms Rekha Beri	Documentalist and Public Information Officer
45	India	UNESCO	Ms Priyanka Sinha	Intern
46	India	UNESCO	Ms Nusrat Jahan	Administrative Officer
47	India	UNESCO	Ms Maria Vaz	Secy, Director's Office
48	India	UNESCO	Ms Elizabeth Vasu	Prog. Asst., Science Sector
49	India	UNESCO	Ms Vrinda Gupta	Volunteer
50	India	UN	Mr Yuri Afanasiev	UN Resident Coordinator
51	India	UNICEF	Mr Louis-Georges Arsenault	UNICEF Representative
52	India	UNDP	Mr Jaco Cilliers	Country Director, UNDP
53	India	UNFPA	Ms Frederika Meijer	UNFPA Representative
54	India	ILO	Ms Panudda Boonpala	Director, ILO DWT for South Asia and ILO Country Office for India
55	India	UN Women	Dr Rebecca Reichmann Tavares	Representative, UN WOMEN Office
56	India	UNICEF	Ms Mita Gupta	Programme Specialist, UNICEF
57	India	UNICEF	Ms Umasree Polepeddi	Education Specialist, UNICEF
58	India	TAS	Mr Umang	CEO, TAS Consultants
59	India	MGIEP	Ms Mathangi Subramanian	Project Officer
60	India	MGIEP	Ms Aditi Pathak	Project Officer
61	India	MGIEP	Mr Shankar Musafir	Project Officer

## Annex II: Concept Note and Conference Annotated Programme

### Sub-regional Conference on EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Agendas in SAARC Countries

13-14 October 2015

New Delhi, India

## I. Concept Note

### Background

The target year 2015 was set by the global education community at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, for reaching the six Education for All (EFA) goals. It is also the deadline for reaching the Millennium Development Goals established by the international community. The great achievements that have been made in expanding educational opportunities worldwide over the past 15 years and the SAARC countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) have shown a remarkable progress in EFA.

However, many of the EFA national reviews conducted by the SAARC countries in 2014 have identified that quite a few EFA goals would not be met by the given deadline and remain to be unfinished agendas. Among others, illiteracy and out-of-school children are quite critical issues in the light that they represent inequality and inequity in the access to education. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), there are 781 million illiterate adults globally today and women account for two-thirds (496 million) of the total illiterate population. The South Asian region is home to 51% of the total illiterate adult population of the world. The latest data available at UIS shows that there are 59.2 million primary school aged children and 64.8 million lower secondary aged children still out-of-school (OOSC) in the world, which has increased from previous UIS and UNICEF report<sup>7</sup> based on 2012 data. The South Asia region contributes 10.3 (17.3%) and 26.2 (40.4%) million

OOSC at primary and lower secondary school going aged children respectively. Along with illiteracy and OOSC some other EFA agendas are also unfinished notably equity, quality, and learning opportunities for youth and adults, which have still not received the attention they deserve. In addition, new challenges have emerged since 2000, such as the need to improve the development of skills for life and for work, for all age groups<sup>8</sup>. EFA unfinished agenda should not remain unfinished, but should be addressed in an intensive manner to fulfil the fundamental human right to education, learning, and knowledge.

Meanwhile, UNESCO and UNICEF have been promoting deliberations with Member States on the post-2015 education agenda. Broad-based and inclusive consultations have been conducted at sub-regional, regional, and global levels. They culminated in the Muscat Agreement, adopted at the 2014 Global EFA Meeting in Oman, representing a shared vision of the global community of education for the future. This important agreement informs the standalone goal and targets on education in the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the UN Open Working Group to be adopted at the UN Summit in New York on 25-27 September 2015. The 2<sup>nd</sup> SAARC Education Ministers Meeting held in New Delhi in October 2014 adopted the New Delhi Declaration on Education, which agreed on the Formulation of the SAARC Framework for Action for the post 2015 education agenda.

The World Education Forum 2015 organized by UNESCO, jointly with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, and the World Bank Group as co-conveners

7 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UNICEF. Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. Montreal: UIS, 2015, 145 p

8 Draft Concept Note of the World Education Forum 2015, Paris: UNESCO, 1 October 2014, 6 p.

(Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-21 May 2015)<sup>9</sup> deliberated both the EFA unfinished and Post-2015 education agendas, taking into account, among others, the outcomes of the Regional Ministerial Conferences on Post-2015 education agendas, the findings of global, regional, and national reviews and studies. The Forum took stock of achievements and shortfalls in the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action. It agreed on a joint position for the education goals and targets in the post-2015 development agenda and eventually agreed on the essential elements of the Education 2030 framework for Action<sup>10</sup>, the final version of which will be presented at the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2015. The Incheon Declaration, “Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all”, resolved to develop comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation systems in order to generate sound evidence for policy formulation and management of education systems as well as ensure accountability. It was further requested that the WEF 2015 co-conveners and partners must support capacity development in data collection, analysis, and reporting at the country level. The SAARC conference is expected to provide inputs for the November UNESCO general conference and also Asia and the Pacific regional meeting in 25-27 November, 2015. The conference is to orient countries to the newly proposed indicators and explores the possibility of developing a set of indicators for regional monitoring.

The UNESCO New Delhi Office and the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF ROSA) have expressed their interest to work with the SAARC Secretariat in the domain of education in line with the Kathmandu and New Delhi declarations as well as the UNESCO-SAARC MoU and the UNICEF- SAARC Cooperation Agreement.

In the above context, the conference will be co-organized by UNESCO New Delhi, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and SAARC Secretariat inviting senior level government officials (an expert each in education planning, literacy and statistics) from SAARC countries

<sup>9</sup> Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all”, World Education Forum 2015, 19-22 May 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea

<sup>10</sup> Framework for Action Education 2030: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all” draft, World Education Forum 2015, 19-22 May 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea.

in New Delhi from 13 -14 October 2015 on the EFA Unfinished and Post 2015 Agendas.

## Main Objectives

- To take stock of the achievements and shortfalls in the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action and to identify critical bottlenecks and creative strategies to address the EFA unfinished agenda focusing on the persistent issues of illiteracy and out-of-school children;
- To disseminate the outcomes and key messages of the World Education Forum
- To propose a Regional framework of Monitoring of post 2015 Sustainable Education Goal 4 ; and
- To reflect on a Regional Cooperation for SAARC Education 2030 Framework for Action in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sub-regional priorities on education.

## Expected Outcomes

- A roadmap for addressing EFA unfinished agendas with special focus on the issues of illiteracy and out-of-school children;
- A concrete action plan for SAARC regional collaboration on monitoring of SDG 4; and,
- Inputs for the Regional Cooperation for SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030.

## Participating Countries

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

**Working language:** English

**Dates and Venues:** 13 – 14 October 2015: New Delhi, India

**Organizers:** Government of India, UNESCO New Delhi, UNICEF ROSA, UIS, UIL, and SAARC secretariat (TBC)

**Participants:** Three participants from each SAARC member states, e.g. (one for each of the following: (1) Education Secretary responsible for school education and literacy; (2) responsible official for monitoring of EFA, education goals of MDGs and SDGs; and (3) responsible official for MDGs and SDGs planning and financing).

## II. Conference Annotated Programme:

### First day: 13 October 2015 (Tuesday)

Time	Subject	Key Speakers	Main Purpose	Chair
09:00-09:30	<b>Registration</b>			
09:30-10:00	<b>Inaugural Session</b>			
09:30-09:35	Welcome Address	UNESCO DIR/NDL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To welcome participants and outline the purpose and format of the meeting</li> </ul>	Dr Subash Chandra Khuntia, Secretary, School Education and Literacy at MHRD
09:35-09:49	Welcome Address	Regional Advisor - Education, UNICEF ROSA,		
09:49-09:50	Inaugural Address	UN Resident Coordinator, India		
09:50-10:00	Inaugural Address	UNESCO DIR/BKK		
10:20 – 13:00	<b>Technical Session I: Challenges and Priorities</b>			
10:20 – 11:00 Presentation	Progress towards education sector development goals, key challenges in SAARC countries	Prof Ramachandran, NUEPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To take stock of the achievements, gaps and challenges on achieving EFA goals in the region.</li> <li>To provide successful, innovative approaches and policy interventions to achieve the unfinished EFA business in the region.</li> </ul>	Afghanistan
11:00 – 11:20 Q/A				
11:20 – 13:00 Presentations	Country presentation by SAARC countries (10 minutes each) on Education challenges and Priorities of Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afghanistan</li> <li>Bangladesh</li> <li>Bhutan</li> <li>India</li> <li>Maldives</li> <li>Nepal</li> <li>Pakistan</li> <li>Sri Lanka</li> </ul>	SAARC countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide overview of the Education Challenges/EFA Unfinished Agenda of each country.</li> <li>To share the lessons learned and priorities of action of each country.</li> <li>To identify priorities of Action for SAARC collaboration for Education 2030.</li> </ul>	Bangladesh
13.00 - 14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>			
14:00 – 15:45	<b>Technical Session II: Sustainable Development Goal 4</b>			
14:00-14:25 Presentation	SDG 4 and SAARC national and regional priorities	Director, UNESCO NDL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To share the key messages of SDG 4 and reflect on SAARC national and regional priorities to pursue SDG 4</li> </ul>	Bhutan
14:25-14:35 Q/A				
14:35-15:00 Presentation	Regional monitoring mechanism and collaboration framework of UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)	UNESCO UIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reflect on the situation of South Asia related to UIS work</li> <li>To propose regional monitoring mechanism based on SDG 4 indicators for the region</li> </ul>	Maldives
15:00-15:10 Q/A				

Time	Subject	Key Speakers	Main Purpose	Chair
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To provide information on what UIS can offer to SAARC countries for effective implementation of national and regional monitoring mechanism and mode of the support</li> <li>· To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps.</li> <li>· To get feedback on SAARC Framework from SAARC members</li> </ul>	
15:10-15:35 Presentation	Collaboration framework of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong learning (UIL) on SAARC framework for Action	UNESCO UIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To share collaboration framework of UIL to SAARC member states</li> <li>· To provide information on what UNESCO Institute for Lifelong learning (UIL) can offer and mode of the support to the SAARC countries to achieve EFA unfinished agenda and streamline SDG goal 4 in line with UNESCO- SAARC MOU, especially on literacy.</li> <li>· To get feedback on SAARC Framework from SAARC members</li> <li>· To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps</li> </ul>	Nepal
15:35-15:45 Q/A				
<b>15.45- 16:00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>			
16:00 – 17:30	Technical Session III: Collaboration mechanism			
16:00-16:25 Presentation	Collaboration framework of UNICEF Regional Office on SAARC framework	Regional Advisor - Education, UNICEF ROSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To share collaboration framework of SAARC member states in line with UNICEF-SAARC Cooperation Agreement.</li> <li>· To share the proposed mechanism of coordination between collaborating agencies- UNICEF- UNESCO- SAARC secretariat and SA countries</li> <li>To get feedback on the presentation for the SAARC Framework for Action</li> <li>· To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps</li> </ul>	Pakistan
16:25-16:35 Q/A				
16:35-17:00 Presentation	SAARC Framework for Action for the post 2015 Education Agenda	Prof Ramachandran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To share SAARC Framework of action on key possible elements for the SAARC countries</li> <li>· To get feedback on the presentation for the SAARC Framework for Action</li> </ul>	Sri Lanka
17:00-17:10 Q/A				
17:10-17:30	Wrap up and conclusion			Director, SEAMEO Secretariat
<b>1900-</b>	<b>Dinner hosted by the Secretary, School Education and Literacy at MHRD</b>			



## Second day: 14 October 2015 (Wednesday)

Time	Subject	Key Speakers	Main purpose	Chair
09:00-10:45	Technical Session IV: Education 2030 and support mechanism			
09:00-09:25 Presentation	Collaboration framework of Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace (MGIEP) and Sustainable Development	MGIEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To share the present work of MGIEP to SAARC member states.</li> <li>To provide information on what MGIEP can offer and mode of the support to the SAARC countries to achieve SDG 4 in line with UNESCO- SAARC MOU, especially on SDG goal 4.7.</li> <li>To propose a way forward, identifying the next steps.</li> </ul>	UNESCO Kabul
09:25-09:35 Q/A				
09:35-10:10 Presentation	Institutional arrangements to enhance regional cooperation: An example of SEAMEO and best practices in SAARC countries	Director, SEAMEO Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To share the SEAMEO experience on:</li> <li>Main mandates including main area of work.</li> <li>Working modality with the countries.</li> <li>Financial and institutional arrangements.</li> <li>Lessons learned and challenges.</li> <li>Message for SAARC secretariat and countries.</li> <li>Possible next steps to establish a mechanism like SEAMEO in SAARC.</li> <li>To share the best practices in SAARC countries to enhance regional cooperation.</li> </ul>	UNESCO Dhaka
10:10-10:45 Q/A and discussion				
<b>10.45- 11:00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>			
11:00 – 12:30	Technical Session V: Monitoring/evaluation and communication			
11:00-11:30 Presentation	Proposed indicators for SDG 4 by TAG and regional perspective	Mr Shailendra Sigdel, Statistical Advisor for South Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To present proposed indicators for SDG 4 proposed by TAG.</li> <li>To discuss the availability, frequency and relevance of the proposed indicators for the SAARC region.</li> </ul>	UNICEF ROSA
11:30-11:45 Q/A				
11:45-12:15 Presentation	Mechanisms to complete the EFA unfinished businesses	Director, UNESCO BKK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To present the existing and new possible mechanism / platform or restructuring of existing mechanism to complete the EFA unfinished businesses and attain SDG 4 in SAARC countries.</li> </ul>	UNESCO Islamabad
12:15-12:30 Q/A				
<b>12:30-13:30</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>			
13:30 – 15:30	Concluding Session: A way forward			
13:30 -15:10	An action framework for regional collaboration with next steps	SAARC Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To discuss and adopt New Delhi Agreement.</li> </ul>	Dr Subash Chandra Khuntia, Secretary, School Education and Literacy at MHRD
15:10-15:20	Way forward & Vote of Thanks	UNICEF ROSA		
15:20-15:30	Way forward & Vote of Thanks	UNESCO NDL		
16:00-18:00	Internal meeting of UNICEF and UNESCO			
1900-	Dinner hosted by UNESCO New Delhi			



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