



**Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference
Bangkok, Thailand - 6-8 August 2014**

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



Preamble

1. We, Ministers of Education, high-level government officials and representatives of civil society organizations, teachers' organizations, United Nations (UN) agencies, development partners, and members of academia and the private sector, gathered in Bangkok, Thailand at the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference from 6 to 8 August 2014. We thank the Ministry of Education of Thailand for hosting this important event.
2. Having taken stock of the progress made in the region in achieving the six Education for All (EFA) goals, having examined the remaining challenges, and having reflected on future priorities and strategies for the Asia-Pacific region to achieve the emerging post-2015 education agenda, we adopt the present statement. Our deliberations were built on the national EFA reviews, the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting (Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2014), and the Outcome Document of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals.
3. We fully endorse the vision, principles and targets laid out in the Muscat Agreement, noting that the overarching goal to '*ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030*' reflects the aspiration of the region for education and development.

Asia-Pacific Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Agenda

4. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right for all children, young people and adults, and an essential condition for peace and inclusive and sustainable development. We also reiterate the importance of education in promoting human rights, human development, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity. We agree that education is essential to inclusive growth, as well as happiness, well-being and prosperity for all in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Since the birth of the EFA movement 25 years ago in Jomtien, Thailand, the Asia-Pacific region has made remarkable progress towards achieving the EFA agenda. Investment and overall progress in education have contributed to rapid economic growth and social transformation. At the same time, we recognize that the agenda remains unfinished. This is the impetus for an expanded vision of Education for All and for meeting persisting and emerging challenges, including demographic changes, migration, climate change, environmental degradation and the technological divide.

Regional Priority Action Areas

6. Lifelong learning for all

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

7. Equity and equality

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

8. Skills and competencies for life and work

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

9. Quality and teachers

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

10. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) for education

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

11. Governance and financing

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

Towards the World Education Forum 2015

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

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